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EDITOR'S NOTES.

POLICY OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

THERE has been of late considerable discussion in regard to the policy of this Association with reference to the differences of theological opinion which now exist in the denomination. The course pursued by its officers has been criticised by some for whose opinion they have profound respect. There are others, who, though disposed to trust the management of the Association, feel somewhat disturbed by the fact that good men have objected to it; and who have asked, that, in accordance with that cordial and frank relation which has always existed between the Association and the denomination that supports it, some explanation should be given of the policy of the Board.

As one of its officers, we wish to comply with this reasonable demand, and shall attempt to describe what we understand this policy to have been. At the same time, inasmuch as this will be wholly an individual statement, and inasmuch as, from the nature of the Secretary's duties, he is personally and alone responsible for

much of what gives the coloring to the position of the Association, we shall drop the editorial for the less modest use of the pronoun, though we are not aware that our own convictions are different from those entertained by the Committee as a whole.

So far as can be judged, objections to the policy of the Association have come about equally from two opposite quarters. The only formal expressions of disapproval which have been received by the Board, were contained in two letters, written at about the same time, (in response to a circular letter which was sent to every society in the denomination,) by men representing severally these opposite standpoints.

The first was from Rev. E. H. Sears, and has since been published in the "Monthly Religious Magazine." The other was from one who was then pastor of one of our societies, but who has since withdrawn wholly from the denomination. I shall not discuss these letters in detail, but only bear the substance of them in mind as a help in the attempt to define the position of our Board. If I refer to them, it will certainly be in no spirit of controversy, but in full recognition of the fact that we are all alike seeking only to bring about the thing which is best.

In December, 1866, Rev. Mr. Weiss resigned his place as a member of our Executive Committee; and a letter was written to him by the Secretary, which letter has been referred to as giving some of the grounds for the complaint against the Association. In this letter, it was stated that the disposition of the Board has been "to act in the broadest spirit of fairness, and in sympathy with all parts of the denomination, whose servants we are; *not by carrying out the views of either extreme, but by pursuing a liberal path of policy, in which, as a broad basis of Christian activity, all could join.*"

This I would repeat, as being essentially the words in which I should describe the attitude which has been maintained, and the propriety of which I would seek to defend.

It is possible, that, in other passages contained in the same letter, and which are quoted by Mr. Sears, there was some ambiguity: else it is hard to understand how he should draw the conclusion, that, under the policy as explained, "our contributions go indiscriminately and indifferently for extending the faith of the churches, or for its destruction and overthrow;" or how he should select some of the most extreme utterances he could find in print, most of them by persons who do not pretend even to be in Unitarian fellowship, as illustrations of what money given to this Association is employed to propagate.

What I intended was simply to affirm, by way of urging that no particular act of the Board had given Mr. Weiss occasion to withdraw, that, in point of fact, *no one had ever been rejected* because of his opinions. I did not mean that the Board were wholly indifferent. Mr. Weiss did not misunderstand it, and cordially admitted the truth of what the letter had affirmed, but said that it was evident enough that the spirit of our policy was such that some of the views he held dear could not be fostered by our agency, and this led him to withdraw. And, by the way, it is due to Mr. Weiss, and at the same time it illustrates the spirit of the Board, — I think, equally honorable to both, — to call attention to the fact, that, by a kind of tacit recognition of certain limitations to the range of our action, he never proposed any thing which gave occasion to controversy between him and others of the Committee; and it remained possible, even after his continued and active presence in the Board, to make the statement contained in the letter referred to. Neither, on the other hand, so

far as I know, was any measure looking to the other extreme proposed, to which he found it necessary to object. He was urged to remain and work, according to this well-recognized policy, expressed in the words already quoted.

I proceed now to give the reasons which have led us to adopt, and to persist in, the course which has been thus defined.

Every one knows that the state of opinion in our denomination, during the last two years, has made unusually difficult and embarrassing the administration of its work. If, indeed, the parties divided themselves so distinctly that all were in full agreement, either with one or with the other of the writers of these letters, the problem would have been different; and one accustomed to deal with mathematics or with philosophical theories, rather than with men, might, in his representation of it, find it easy to solve. But I beg attention to what I think a true picture of the case.

The principle of free inquiry which has been professed by our denomination, from its beginning till now, has been no empty motto; and with the measure of earnestness and intelligence, with the opportunity and the disposition for investigation which has existed among us, and the natural variety of temperament and organization and training, the result has been a widely varying standard of belief, shading all the way, *and with all sorts of intermingling phases*, from two very distant extremes. It is curious to see how these opinions intermingle. It is very easy to use the words "radical" and "conservative;" but, when you talk with some person who is ranked as radical, you may be surprised by some expression of reverence for Christ which goes beyond the ordinary evangelical profession; and, on the other hand, you

may find some conservative man holding opinions, on certain points, equally strong the other way.

An illustration of this is found in the very case of Dr. Schenkel, the radicalism of whose book is one of Mr. Sears's strongest grounds for censuring the Association. Undoubtedly, there are sentiments in that book which, in a measure, warrant the terms in which Mr. Sears characterizes it; but in an article, called out by similar strictures, Dr. Schenkel thus defines his position in regard to Christ: —

"With what eyes," he says, "can he have read my book who has discovered in it only a mere earthly Christ?" — "Christ is not simply a man, like any other; but he is *the* man — the eternal, personal centre of humanity — who, from all eternity, was ordained to reveal, in a human way, God's infinite glory." — "Mankind needs, according to my representation, a mediator who redeems them from sin and reconciles them to God; and he *has appeared once for all* in the person of Jesus Christ." — "I affirm, in the most emphatic manner, that not only has there never been any one superior, but no one equal to him on earth, and that there never can be; and that the sovereignty over humanity has been intrusted to him as its God-appointed head." If I am correctly informed, there are many points in Dr. Schenkel's system of dogmatics, as he teaches in his office as professor in Germany, that the most conservative among our brethren would regard too orthodox for them to accept.

I refer to these opinions of Dr. Schenkel, not by way of defence of his book, — that, of course, is to be judged by its own merits, — but only to illustrate, by his position, how difficult it is to fix on any definition or statement by which any one's position may be strictly characterized. There is no theoretical statement that

will answer such an end, — no equation of curve that can precisely mark the limits within which our denominational recognition must be confined. The isothermal lines, so to speak, of essential Christian unity run zigzag, up and down, across many parallels; and there can be no arbitrary Mason and Dixon's line to separate North and South.

Furthermore, we of this Unitarian fellowship have, every one of us, been growing and changing, year by year; and, while seeking and gaining new light, we have been moving in one direction and another, and, in the course of this individual experience, we have interlaced each other's paths, and been influenced by each other's arguments, and moulded somewhat by our mutual sympathies, till, somehow, we have come to be bound together by a kind of personal attachment, the strength of which we hardly realize till one suggests the question, where we shall divide.

Where shall we divide?

A few may be prepared with a decisive answer, that would be satisfactory to themselves; but I think I do not misjudge the spirit of our denomination in believing, that, if the Executive Committee, or any other body, during the last two years, had attempted arbitrarily to draw a line of separation, it would have been either such a division as the hand would make in cutting through water, closed up again at once by the intermingling fluid, or else it would have been provocative of feelings most disastrous to our cause.

Would Mr. Sears like to cut himself away from such a man as Dr. Gannett? or Dr. Gannett from James Freeman Clarke? or Dr. Clarke from Dr. Furness? or Dr. Furness from Robert Collyer? Would Robert Collyer endure a wall between himself and many whom we

could name, who, though in sentiment far from the majority in our ranks, yet feel the Christian name so dear to them, and prize so much the principles on which our denomination rests, that they ask our fellowship?

It is thus, when looked at from the point of view of those administering the work of the Association, a very practical question and a very delicate one; and it must come up — each time with some new complication — in every single instance where we are called either to employ a man as a missionary or as a supply for a Sunday, or to help a society that employs a man for its pastor. No one who has not been situated just as we have been can fully comprehend this. I could recount many special instances, from the experiences of the year, that would make very plain the difficulty which I have sought to indicate.

"And yet," Mr. Sears may say, "do you not see a certain limit to our denominational fellowship?"

Certainly I do. I believe, for example, with him, of course, that it does not extend so far as to include those who are not within the pale of Christianity itself. I believe, further, that, in the present condition of our body, it covers, possibly, a wider range than is wholesome, or than can be permanently maintained. I cannot but think that there are men in our fellowship, who, as time goes on, and our position gradually defines itself, will either *find their views essentially modified, and come out, as I hope, into a clearer and better faith;* or else will, of their own choice, dissolve their connection with us.

I shall presently speak of the question, which of these two results is most to be striven for, and of the course by which it is most likely to be secured. But, for the present, let us assume that it is to be the latter. Then I say that even if this separation is to be, it must come nat-

urally, and not by force. It is to be a matter of growth and development, not of arbitrary enactment. It is to come by the gradual shaping of the sentiment of the denomination. And the very thing which, if brought about in this natural way, would be easy and satisfying to all, might, if precipitated, be attended with consequences most injurious.

I remember, when a boy, how we used to gather the hickory-nuts, with the hard, green rind closely covering the shell; and, in our haste to separate them, we would sometimes, with a jack-knife, cut the rind off with much pains, and then never leave the shell wholly clean; or, if we tried to pound it off, would very likely crush the shell itself. But if we put them on the roof of the shed, till the frost had come and the juices had ripened, the rind would open of itself, and the fair, white nut drop out, for our winter's store. I believe in the ripening process in the moral and spiritual, as well as in the vegetable, kingdom.

In all this line of argument, my aim is to present this thing as a practical question, just as it must be treated by the executive officers of this Association.

Perhaps this position of the Association, in its relation to this matter, may be further illustrated by a case somewhat analogous; viz., the relation of our national government to the growth and establishment of the ideas of liberty and equality in the United States.

Freedom and slavery were here together. It was easy to maintain that they could not co-exist; but they did, and slavery could not be removed until the fulness of time had come. When the rebellion began, we had an anti-slavery President and an anti-slavery Congress; and there was a clamor on every hand, that they should at once declare slavery at an end. Perhaps they might have done

so; probably they would have been glad to do so: but they knew that such things were controlled by something other than senates and proclamations; that a certain preparation must first be undergone. That preparation was to be in the sentiments of the nation itself. It was fostered by discussion on both sides, and by the acts and incidents which every day's history revealed. John Brown and Jefferson Davis; the poets and preachers and editors true to the principles of freedom, and, on the other hand, the oppressors and slave advocates themselves, — all helped to educate the popular mind, and to determine the result. And when at last the moment came, and Mr. Lincoln gave his emancipation proclamation, he frankly declared that he "had not controlled events, but events him."

In like manner, the officers of this Association, so far as they are intrusted with the administration of the affairs of the denomination, must allow the shaping of its limits to be chiefly determined by the influences at work within it.

"But," it may be said, "here is a definite point. Do you not, by this present policy, cause the Association to aid men and views whose influence some members of the Association deem pernicious?"

The question is a fair one; and we very frankly answer, that undoubtedly we do. It is one of the evils which is, so far as we can see, inevitable, if we once adopt in our basis of fellowship the principle of liberty, as Unitarians have always interpreted it. The thing for each one to determine is, whether on the whole the evil is sufficient to counterbalance the advantages or the hope of advantage from the principle itself. Certainly, thus far, no greater difficulties have arisen than Channing

more than once foretold; and the prospect of which he accepted, when he planted himself on the principle from which he knew they would ensue.

Again, let us guard against a fallacy which attaches to this argument as it is sometimes stated. The question is often put as though it were simply this: "Shall I give money to send out Mr. A. or Mr. B., who preaches what I hold to be pernicious?" In reality it is a very different one, and the distinction demands serious consideration. The question really is, "*Shall I contribute to an institution which, in order to be true to its fundamental principle, may now and then find itself helping such men and views; but whose general service,* AND THAT LARGELY BECAUSE OF THIS PRINCIPLE, *is in the line of what I hold to be most vital and worthy to be aided by all the means I can command.*"

Besides, it is easy to be led to exaggerate the extent of an evil to which our attention is earnestly directed. I cannot but feel, that in this way Mr. Sears (unintentionally, of course) was very unfair in his manner of quoting passages, as already referred to. Judging in that way of any sect in Christendom, it might be exposed in such a manner, that the majority, if of a timid disposition, would be frightened out of it.

Take, for example, that great denomination to which Beecher and so many other earnest, liberal, Christian men belong. You will find in it some who hold the most horrible doctrines that can well be conceived: some who believe and preach that infants, if they die without having performed on them an outward rite, of which they can have no consciousness at all, are doomed to the infinite wrath of God; that the great heathen world, for not believing in Christ, of whom they have had no possible chance to hear, are utterly and inevitably lost; and that,

while this is the doom, even of those among them who in holiness of character may have exemplified every virtue, yet if one of them, ever so depraved, should happen, through some stray missionary, to hear of Christ, and be influenced to utter in his last moment the words, "I believe in Jesus," that man will go to Abraham's bosom, and there, with all the blest, will find much of his delight through all eternity in witnessing the agonies of those other ones in hell!

Such doctrines as these exist in that denomination,—doctrines which, when placed by the side of these which are talked about among us, suggest the comparison of Jesus when he so impressively declared, "Whoso speaketh against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoso speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." When our brethren of that communion indignantly complain of us because we sometimes, in controversy, single out such doctrines for our attack, their complaint is not on the ground that such doctrines are not held and preached by persons in their fellowship, (they own that they are), but on the ground that we ought to know that to charge them upon the denomination as a whole is a calumnious misrepresentation.

Very likely these brethren of other denominations have their domestic troubles as well as we; and among these probably none are greater than the fact, that the advocates among them of such horrible doctrines give to the world occasion of reproach against them all. But, when it comes to action, what do we find? Do they refuse to join in supporting their great denominational activities because of the existence in the body of some things which they disapprove?

Not long ago, I showed to a liberal orthodox man an extract from a letter in the "Missionary Herald," from

one of the missionaries of the American Board, which contained such views as I have alluded to; and I said, "How can you help support such missionary work as this?" He replied, "I disagree with such doctrines as much as you, and I labor in my denomination to counteract them: but I support our missions notwithstanding; *because I know, that, without some organized activities, nothing can be accomplished; and I know that, in the main, ours advances the interests of what I accept as evangelical Christianity.*"

Just so, who can doubt that the Unitarian denomination represents, and that the Unitarian Association, as its chief organized activity, helps to advance, the interests of what all accept in the main as the doctrines of liberal Christianity? And who can fail to see that these doctrines (clearly enough understood in their general sweep and purpose, however varied may be the views of individual members of the body) are allied with the noblest thought and best spirit of our age? Who of us will not own with joy, that, where they are received, they give new inspiration to good aims and a generous life; that they encourage a nobler humanity and a sweeter faith in God; that they quicken the spirit of philanthropy, and raise civilization to a higher plane, and bear in every way the mark of an authority that is divine?

But here we must notice a stricture upon our course, that comes from the radical side. I have declared that our aim has been to pursue a broad line of policy between, and not including, the two extremes of the denomination. "But," it has often been objected to us, "you do take in the conservative extreme. You publish, without hesitation, any of their books; but you have not printed one of ours."

All depends on our interpretation of the Unitarian position, and thus of what constitutes the "extreme" on either side. The point of the criticism lies in the assumption (and this seems to be frequently implied), that the founders of our denomination, when they established it, simply indicated a *direction of advance*. If this is so, then the position of these early Unitarians is simply the point of departure, and therefore for ever the *extreme* limit at that end. While the progress may go on indefinitely in the direction which has been indicated as the line of progress, and the farthermost in advance constitute the other extreme.

Under this view it would be right to say, that we favored one extreme and not another, if we circulated the views of those who in the beginning represented the Unitarian position, and not the views of those who have gone farthest in the direction in which their separation from Orthodoxy lay.

It seems to me, however, that this interpretation of the Unitarian position is just as erroneous as is that which some on the opposite side are disposed to make, when they assume that our Unitarian fathers, in separating from Orthodoxy, went at once, and once for all, just the length it was proper or possible to go.

The true statement is rather this: Our fathers, in establishing our denomination, did not simply indicate a direction of progress; neither did they fix a finality to the results of freedom of thought and belief. But they stepped right out from the prevailing organizations, and planted themselves on a certain hitherto unrecognized principle of Christian interpretation and Christian fellowship. From the nature of the case, their position for a while was somewhat definite and circumscribed. They were a small band, obliged to act on the defensive, and knit together by personal sympathies and the necessity of

mutual support. But the character of their principles was such that the position could not fail to broaden; and it has broadened. Its original bounds would hardly hold it now. But it has not broadened in *one direction only*. If it has on one side gone further in the radical direction than Norton and Ripley, it has also gone in the orthodox direction beyond Burnap and Buckminster and Ware.

So that Dr. Eliot and Dr. Gannett, or any other names who were part of that original nucleus, no more represent the extreme on one side, than does Robert Collyer or Dr. Furness or Dr. Clarke on the other. The wide circle which would include Theodore Parker and extreme radical names, would, in its opposite arc, embrace Bushnell and Beecher, and a host of names like those. Unitarianism may yet come to be the Broad Church that shall comprehend them all!

Fear is expressed in the letter of Mr. S., that, under its present attitude, the Unitarian Association may not show itself to be "unequivocally, unalterably, evangelically, Christian." This objection, coming from such a quarter, demands a serious examination into the real tendencies of the denomination, and the probable effect of the policy, which is the object of such distrust.

Certainly, when we consider the powerful tendencies to materialism and scepticism in the present age, there is reason for all, in every denomination, who feel deep convictions and a positive faith, to use their most earnest endeavor to counteract the tendencies. Personally, I accord very nearly with the theological position of Mr. Sears, so far as I understand it, and sympathize in his earnest advocacy of it. But there are considerations which make my view in regard to co-operation and fellowship very different from his.

In the first place, firmly as I may be persuaded in my

own belief, I cannot forget that Truth itself is greater and better than my conceptions of truth, and that our denomination is based on the theory that it is nobler to help secure the conditions for a perfect seeking after truth, than to help preserve and spread any special view of it that has been once attained. So thoroughly have I been trained to this idea, by my Unitarian education, that I cannot do otherwise than make the spirit of earnest seeking, joined with purity of heart and life, — rather than any creed, — my test of fellowship ; and I must own as my Christian brethren any pure and earnest men who conscientiously and sincerely profess themselves to be Christian believers.

Moreover, it has often happened to me to be compelled to admire and to feel humbled before the evident piety and sincerity, and the personal consecration, of men who, in doctrine, fall very far short of what I conceive to be the highest faith.

And, furthermore, while I have confidence that truth, under free influences, must ultimately prevail, I have also remembered, what seems to me of no slight consequence, that, in the pursuit of truth, calmness and freedom from passion are, above all things, essential; and that men may be driven, under the influence of irritation and opposition, into extremes of opinion, to which they could never have been led, if the course of thought had not been thus disturbed.

Accordingly, in my position as Secretary, I have endeavored to preserve friendly relations with many of those from whose views I widely dissent; though, I trust, I have never done this in such a way as to compromise or to conceal my own convictions, nor have ever hesitated to defend and to urge these, as my opportunity and ability have allowed.

That, in consequence of such a policy on the part of the Association, as has been indicated, it or the denomination would become other than unequivocally, unalterably Christian, I have never for a single moment feared. If I had, it would have been because my faith was weaker than it is in the divinely implanted and abiding value of Christianity itself.

Certainly, I feel no such fear from any thing which I see in the present aspect of the denomination.

Look at our denomination, to-day, — full of life and earnestness, as, I believe, never before; look at it, as it appears in our missionary reports, or in the record of our public discussions; in our theatre preachings; in our conference organizations; in the working of our stronger congregations, or in the earnest beginnings in some prairie town. Look at it, as you see it in the clear portrayal of its doctrines, by some one who has wrought out and settled on the solid convictions which, perhaps, most of us recognize as the Unitarian creed, or, as it appears, in what may seem to us the crude speculations of one who, ardently following his reason in the sincere pursuit of truth, may, as we think, in his eager denial of old errors, overstep the bounds, and root out also much that is good. Look at the denomination, not with the spirit of minute criticism, but in a comprehensive view, and see if it be not Christian — even if it be not altogether in just the position which seems best to you or to me; — see whether you cannot trust it to its own development; see whether, considering the spirit which animates it, it is not more likely, under generous influences, to fulfil the mission which God has assigned for us, than though we were narrowing its lines, and catechising its workers, and making antagonisms within its ranks.

There remains no room to do more than indicate, in

conclusion, one consideration, which seems to me almost paramount, in deciding as to this matter of policy which I have attempted to discuss.

I just used the word "mission." I devoutly *believe* that we, as a denomination, have a providential mission, peculiarly our own, with which this question of policy has much to do.

If we were considering only our own personal interests, or edification, or satisfaction, there could be no question that it would be better to join with those who believe most nearly with us, and be content with a narrow fellowship. But when we look at the present religious aspect of the Christian world, we see a summons and an opportunity which make us put such personal considerations into some secondary place. See what yearnings there are everywhere for greater freedom in religious thought! This liberal sentiment is manifesting itself in other churches as well as in ours; and, with the instinctive desire for fellowship, is now craving organization and union. But see what a wide range of opinion this sentiment represents! Réville, and Schenkel, and Colani, and Coquerel, and a score of familiar names, stand for its varied phases, having come to it by independent ways. No narrow platform or inclosure can hold them, and yet who can say that they do not belong together?

But there is also another class, — the thousands upon thousands, in this country and in Europe, who rank as the unchurched; a large proportion of them men of excellent character, and most active minds. Unchurched! — spiritually houseless and homeless! Shall no one take them in? It is true, they have very generally been led to entire indifference to religion, and to rejection of its profession and its forms. But this is because they have seen no middle way between this and the acceptance of

doctrines which their reason abhors; and we have experienced for our encouragement, that, when Christianity is presented to them under a more rational form, it commands their assent, and exercises over them its regenerating power. It may seem to some unsafe to maintain, that we ought to meet with a very liberal spirit, overtures to our fellowship from such as these. The fellowship may not be altogether what we would choose; for their minds may not, even when led to faith, shape their religious sentiments after the same pattern as our own, and much of the roughness of their former habits may remain about them still. It might be more agreeable and safer too, if with careful steps we walk apart and hold up our robes from contact with errors we have risen above, and shut our doors lest those come in whose imperfect faith and theories might disturb the sanctity of our own. But if we do, then we are false to the mission which God has given us; and for which we have opportunities possessed by none besides!

It is a significant fact and may well be pondered by us, that some of the most enlightened and influential men in the Church of England, already see these things to which I have alluded; and are to-day devising how they may broaden their ecclesiastical basis, so as to occupy the very position which has been transmitted to us by Channing and our fathers; and which, at the time of its greatest opportunity, some would have us discard!

The mission of Unitarianism among the sects is like that of America among the nations. What an experiment in government this of ours was; and how they predicted that it must fail, when we undertook to develop the idea of liberty as consistent with order and righteous law. Even now what dangers seem to threaten. People abroad witness the storms of parties and political agitations, and

think the whole fabric of the republic is shattered. They look and see the throngs from other countries, — thousands a week, — pouring in, with no habits of self-government, whose only idea of freedom is license; and they say this will corrupt and overthrow us, and that our boasted liberty will be anarchy and disorder. Nay, but it is our mission; and with open doors we welcome them in, — the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed, — never hesitating, though their political sentiments be ever so immature. We trust the principles on which we are founded; we trust the power of education and of wholesome social influences and the established habits and character of the nation to control and gradually to mould the various elements; and we believe in America as the home of the free! So of Unitarianism. No wonder its broad basis of liberty should sometimes occasion alarm. Certainly no wonder that persons of the creed-bound sects should predict our ruin; *but our very mission lies in that from which our dangers seem to come!*

Such in the main, are the reasons, as I understand them, for the policy which has been pursued, in the management of the affairs of the Association.

Under this policy, followed with the courage and the earnestness which our faith in the power of Truth, and in the principles of Unitarianism, ought to inspire, I anticipate, when I look at the opportunity before us, results the grandeur of which shall outrun our most sanguine dreams.

REPORTS OF LOCAL CONFERENCES.

[The following Reports of Local Conferences were kindly furnished for presentation at the annual meeting of the American Unitarian Association. They were prepared because our several organizations have been working in such close co-operation, that the secretaries believed such a statement of the work of each, and the opportunities developed by this work, would be of great interest, and might be helpful in the deliberations of the Association (of which most of those connected with the Conferences are members) in regard to its future plans of action. We are glad to present them here, as an indication of the real practical value, which has already become so manifest, of this great plan of organization.

In order to give some uniformity to the reports, a series of questions, prepared by one of the Local Secretaries, was printed, and sent by the several secretaries to the churches, in order to procure desired statistics.

From the answers to these inquiries, several of the secretaries have submitted carefully prepared tables, showing exactly the record of the individual societies. These tables are very interesting and valuable; but, as some of the societies requested that no publicity should be given to their returns, the tables are not printed with the reports, and only the aggregate results are given.

A few reports were presented too late to be here printed.]

REPORT OF THE WESTERN CONFERENCE.

The churches embraced within the limits of the Western Conference, with a few exceptions, have never contributed to the funds of the Unitarian Association; but whatever they have done for denominational objects has been done through the Western Conference, or by their individual and separate action. During the year 1867, I find, from the statistics I have been able to gather, that all these churches have received copies of the "Monthly Journal" from the Association, for gratuitous distribution; that from ten to one hundred copies have been sent to each society through the year, and tracts given to them whenever called for; that the Association has assisted in the support of eighteen ministers and missionaries, besides the generous aid it has given to the students of the Theological School at Meadville, and to professors at Antioch College; that it has contributed towards the purchase or erection of five church edifices; and employed a number of ministers and students in transient missionary service, preaching at different places, selling books, and circulating papers and tracts. In these various ways, the Association has expended, during the year, not less than $12,000 within the limits of this Conference. It has done its work here in a broad and catholic spirit, setting up no dogmatic tests, but aiding men and churches wherever there was promise that a good Christian work would be done. And its expenditures have been judicious, as well as liberal, promising a fair return in permanent growth and in beneficent influence.

The amount raised by our churches for strictly denominational purposes, and expended through the Western

Conference or individual action, may be put down at $5,400; for benevolent objects, including the education of the freedmen, the care of orphans, the relief of the poor, and other philanthropic work connected with the churches, $14,790; for the repair and erection of church edifices, $65,450.

The proportion of our people who take our religious papers and magazines, is variously estimated, in the different churches, to be from one-fifth to one-half; and about the same proportion of them have our religious books. The "Sunday-school Gazette" is taken in nearly all our Sunday schools; and the Society is assisted by a few in annual contributions. Many of our ministers are engaged in missionary work, preaching in public halls and school-houses, and doing all in their power to extend a knowledge of our faith in districts where it is comparatively unknown. From personal acquaintance with almost all of our Western churches, I think I may say that they are generally prosperous, that they are more deeply impressed with a sense of the greatness of the opportunity which they now have for influence and work than ever before, and more anxious to make their principles known and felt throughout the country. They have ceased to expect or desire mere toleration: they mean to assert their ideas in the boldest and strongest way, and make them aggressive in every community.

During the last three months, I have been acting as the Western Secretary of the Association, and have given my whole time to the duties of that office. My work has been necessarily spread over a vast extent of territory. I have made it a point, as far as it was possible, to visit all our churches, find out their actual condition, counsel with the pastors and people concerning the prospects and

needs of the cause, interest them in plans of missionary labor, and so bring them all into real and hearty sympathy with each other and with our work. I have supplied vacant pulpits, by correspondence with those ready to enter upon our work here temporarily or permanently. I have preached for our ministers while they have gone into the missionary field for one or more Sundays. I have visited new places, to preach to whoever would come to hear me, and consult with the friends of our liberal faith on the steps to be taken to develop and organize liberal sentiment. I have taken an office in Chicago, at No. 2, Washington Street, where all our publications, tracts, papers, periodicals, and books will be kept, and where our churches and missionaries may be supplied with our literature. Here I hold myself in readiness to advise, with our parishes and ministers and the friends of the liberal cause, on all matters pertaining to the interests of our work and the good of our churches. During these three months, I have travelled 6,258 miles, visiting nearly all our churches in Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and Kansas; and have preached and spoken thirty-six times in twenty-two different places. At the same time, I have had a very large correspondence to keep up, upon business connected with the work.

Of course, this is scarcely a beginning of what there is to do; but it seems to me a step in the right direction. If I can go on patiently doing the work as it opens before me here, and if the Association will be satisfied to wait for the fruit, doing what they can to encourage all good workers, there will come at last an abundant harvest of liberal-Christian churches and earnest Christian souls. But we must sow in faith. We cannot reasonably expect great, immediate, and visible results. We must work in a broad, hopeful, fearless way; believing that no really

earnest preaching of the word can fail anywhere to bless mankind; that nothing done for the truth, in the spirit of Christ, shall ever be in vain.

Truly yours, C. A. STAPLES.

REPORT FROM THE NEW-HAMPSHIRE UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

IN response to the request of the Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, the following account of the condition of things in New Hampshire is submitted: —

From a careful survey of the field, there is room for no doubt of a rapid growth of liberal views throughout the State within the last few years. This shows itself in various ways. Not unfrequently it is seen in the seedy-looking, tumble-down, or half-filled meeting-houses of the "evangelical" sects. These deserted or half-deserted edifices, *multiplying every year*, are the significant monuments of a faith either dead or dying, and for which this age has no promise of a resurrection. There are plenty of towns in this State where it would seem that nearly all the sects have tried their hand, one after another; and where all have shown, by the result, their total inability to satisfy the wants of the people, who have grown more and more sceptical of the worth of *theology*, with each new effort. They are grown totally callous to the sectarian cry of "*Believe this, believe that*, OR BE LOST!" while there is no ground for supposing they would be deaf to him who should propose any reasonable and noble work TO DO.

Special efforts have been made to have our views known — the movement, in several instances, beginning with the people themselves — in the following towns:

Andover, Canaan, Franklin, Guildhall (Vt.), Hanover, Jaffrey, Jefferson, Kensington, Littleton, Milford, Newport, Northumberland, Richmond, South Newmarket, Washington, Winchester, and perhaps a few others. And in most cases the good attendance upon our public services, the high character of many of those most interested in them, and the eagerness with which they have taken such tracts as we have had to offer, — all indicate a very great and wide-spread interest in our work. There is no expectation or thought of building up churches in many of these places thus visited. Religious matters are too nearly in a state of chaos. The old sectarian lines and prejudices, and merely local disagreements, often forbid union for the present. But we believe broader, humaner, and more charitable views sown broadcast will lead to more tolerant and harmonious feeling; and when the day of crystallization comes, when *The People's Church* shall be agreed upon, we trust it will be established upon principles durable as human nature itself; and we hope that, in our way, we shall have contributed something to hasten its coming and give it strength.

I am convinced that the theatre services in Boston, so extensively reported by the daily press, have done a great deal to create an interest in practical religion, and in the work and publications of the Unitarian denomination. They have brought to the favorable notice of thousands a religious body, the very name of which has hitherto been a bugbear, or a synonym of slothful ease. In this State it was felt that the new and favorable disposition, on the part of many, to read publications which before they had been induced, by the "keepers of the faith," assiduously to shun, afforded an opportunity, not to be lost, to place in the hands of the people our freely offered Unitarian tracts. We trusted they would lead to thought and

discussion, and in the end to less dogmatism and a better life. We were exceedingly glad to seize the chance of showing, that there were at least *two* sides to some questions, which many think Calvin and some of his contemporaries settled once for all. For the sake of opening the discussion of the Trinity upon textual grounds, I asked the American Unitarian Association if they would not republish, in tract form, Dr. Peabody's first discourse on Jesus Christ, in his "Lectures on Christian Doctrine." This seemed to me to be the best treatment of the subject, from an exegetical point of view, for general circulation; and from the high esteem in which its author is held by the "evangelical" sects, nothing seemed so likely to command their attention and respect. The American Unitarian Association very kindly complied; and of these, and other tracts on various subjects, several thousands are in process of distribution throughout the State. The method of distribution has been to obtain from the State Register, or Political Manual, or in any other way, the names of as many prominent citizens of each town as possible, — physicians, lawyers, justices, selectmen, &c., — and send tracts by mail to each address. This has been done under the sanction of the directors of the New-Hampshire Unitarian Association; who voted to ask the American Unitarian Association to reprint another of Dr. Peabody's lectures, for the same purpose, — the very excellent one on "Human Nature."

Another encouragement we have in the general prosperity of our own churches throughout the State. With the exception of two or three, we are assured that they are increasing in strength and influence. For building purposes, enlargements, or repairs, the churches have raised, *within their own limits*, as reported to us, $28,330; for denominational purposes, about $2,500; for purely

benevolent objects (public collections), $3,514. (From two churches, Concord and Charlestown, no reports reached us.)

Of religious periodicals, reported to us, taken in the societies, there are copies of the Liberal Christian, 128; Christian Register, 126; Radical, 14; Christian Examiner, 11; Religious Monthly Magazine, 10; also quite a number of Universalist papers. The American Unitarian Association sends *gratuitously* to the churches 400 to 500 copies of the Monthly Journal.

In behalf of the New-Hampshire Unitarian Association,

J. C. Learned, *Secretary.*

REPORT OF THE MAINE CONFERENCE.

Topsham, May 1, 1868.

My dear Sir, — This is my fourth report, in all, relating to missionary work in Maine; two of them having been made to the Maine Conference, and two to you, as Secretary of the American Unitarian Association. In my first published report, which may be found in the "Monthly Journal" for October, 1866, the plan of operations was given which I proposed to follow, and the principles which would control my actions, with reference to other liberal denominations. To this plan and to these principles I have uniformly adhered, endeavoring to keep myself as far as possible in the right, in all my intercourse with Christians of every name, and to give no just cause for complaint by any unwarranted interference with "other men's labors." If in any instance I have failed in this purpose, it has certainly not been my design.

I have not been conscious, in any case, of violating the golden rule, — of doing to others what, under similar circumstances, we could reasonably complain of if others should do us.

It has so happened, that some of the fields which I have visited, and in which I have labored with more or less success, had been previously occupied by our Universalist brethren; and that some dissatisfaction has been expressed, in certain quarters, at the course which has been pursued. This was not unnatural, perhaps; but it was wholly without just cause.

Complaints have been made more especially with reference to Hallowell, Saccarappa, and Yarmouth. The facts are simply these: —

In Hallowell there are two liberal societies, — Unitarian and Universalist. Both of them were weak, and neither of them able to support preaching alone. The Unitarian society was the older, and at one period more flourishing. The Universalist manifested more life. Some in both societies were desirous of union, in order to increase their strength. Some among the Universalists expressed the desire, that the Unitarians would get a minister with whom they could sympathize, and to whose support they would willingly contribute. I went to Hallowell in order to ascertain the true state of things, and to preach. I preached to good audiences in the Unitarian church. The Universalists furnished the choir, and many of them attended the services. All seemed very cordial. Of course I advocated the union of the two societies, if it could be effected on fair and honorable principles, and such as would be satisfactory to all parties. I did not advise them to go to the Unitarian church, nor to settle a Unitarian minister: I left these questions to be decided among themselves. I have been consulted once or twice

as you know, by some of the leading members of the Universalist society in Hallowell, in regard to a minister; and I have sent one or two there at their own request, but not until so requested. I have not attempted, in any way, to interfere with their religious preferences.

Next in regard to Saccarappa.

Some time during the month of December, 1865, and previous to my appointment as State missionary, a gentleman from Saccarappa called at my house on private business of his own. I had then eight sabbaths at my disposal, to be devoted to missionary labors, as I might judge best; and I wished to employ them where I could do so to the best advantage. I mentioned this fact in the course of our conversation, and made inquiries in regard to Saccarappa. I was told that there was no liberal preaching there at the time, and that there had not been any for quite a number of years; that the Universalists had a church in the village, but that it was then occupied by the Methodists; and that it was doubtful whether any place could be procured for the purpose, except a hall. He told me, however, that he could make inquiries upon the subject, and inform me by letter. He wrote me shortly after, to the effect that he found a much greater interest in the matter than he had expected; that it was proposed to hold a meeting in a few days, "when the subject would be laid before all present;" that he had stated already to the leading men the conversation we had had; and that it was desirable that I should express to him by letter the terms on which I would furnish them with preaching, and how long.

Thus solicited, I wrote in reply, that if it was the desire of the liberal people in the place, and they would defray my expenses, I would preach to them gratuitously for the eight Sundays already referred to. The proposition,

thus made in compliance with this request, was at once agreed to; and I was invited to occupy, alternately with the Methodists, the pulpit of the Universalist church. The Methodists, however, finding that the church was likely to be wanted, at once resigned it; and there was afterwards nothing to hinder me from using it whenever I thought proper. I had preached but two or three Sundays, when the committee of the society called upon me, and informed me that they had succeeded in raising the sum of three hundred dollars, and that, although they knew that the sum was inadequate, it was the best they could do then; and they would be glad to have me supply the pulpit on alternate Sundays through the year, if I felt that I could do so for that sum. I hesitated in regard to the matter at first: because I was doubtful whether I should be able, consistently with my duties elsewhere, to bestow so much of my time upon that one place; and I did not give them my answer till four or five weeks afterwards, when it became necessary that the question should be decided. Then, having consulted our committee on missions, I acceded to their request. At the close of this arrangement, the wish was expressed by them to have one service every sabbath, instead of two on alternate sabbaths; and this proposition was carried into effect, and their pulpit is still supplied every Sunday afternoon by a minister of their own choice.

The following extract of a letter sent to me by the parish committee, and signed with their own names, will be, I think, a sufficient voucher for the facts which have been stated: —

SACCARAPPA, Jan. 20, 1868.

. . . We of our own free will and accord, without any solicitation on your part, gave you a call to supply us with preaching, until we could make some other arrangement; which you did, to our complete satisfaction, for about fifteen months. Since that

time we have taken the responsibility, without consulting those who are not connected immediately with the society at Saccarappa, to employ the Rev. Mr. Hewes, who supplies our desk at the present time. And it is with pleasure that we express our thanks and obligations to you personally, and through you to the Unitarian Association, for the service rendered us in our then feeble condition.

I may add to the foregoing, that the society at Saccarappa has been constantly increasing; that the pews are now all taken up; and that I have been assured there is scarcely an individual among them who has any regrets for the course that things have taken.

Lastly, Yarmouth.

The first knowledge I had in relation to the liberal cause in Yarmouth was through a letter from you, informing me that you had been called upon by a gentleman of that place, who, speaking for himself and others, desired that a Unitarian minister might be sent to them. I went there by your request on a week-day, — not, of course, to preach, but to ascertain as far as I could the true condition of things. I found there a Universalist house, and the remnant of a Universalist society. But the house had been unoccupied for quite a number of years. They were now desirous that it should be occupied again. Some preferred a Universalist; others, a Unitarian: but all had agreed to act together, let the result be as it might. I was asked to supply the pulpit for two Sundays, and did so, to the apparent satisfaction of those who heard me. In the mean time, it was decided among them to employ a Universalist, if they could obtain one of character and education. Otherwise, all were to unite on a Unitarian. I left, with the understanding that I might be wanted again. A Universalist minister was found. He continued with them about three months. Then again the church was closed, and remained so for a year or more.

They seemed to have become discouraged; and there was no apparent prospect of their doing any thing more for the present. Finding that this was the case, I told them that, if they wished for preaching, I would supply them occasionally through the winter, and they could pay me what they felt able. They accepted the offer, and I have done as I promised. But I have done nothing by word or act in opposition to any class of liberal Christians. I have not made the least suggestion, or given the slightest hint, that they should change their denominational relations. I supposed the people competent to act for themselves in regard to all such matters; and I was willing that they should. They certainly should be allowed to speak for themselves in regard to this matter. You can ask for nothing more explicit than the letter from which the following extracts are taken. It bears the signatures of six of the principal members of the society, and those who pay nearly all that is paid for the support of preaching, whether Universalist or Unitarian. It is dated —

YARMOUTH, Jan. 8, 1868.

. . . The spirit manifested towards you is unjust and ungenerous. You have not "tried to do any thing in opposition to our judgment and inclination." You have not in the least "presumed to dictate to us as to what we must do, and how we must do it:" we have not been "deceived or misled" by you in the course we have taken. No word or act of yours toward us can in any way be construed as underhanded or unfair.

. . . In the early part of this winter, you came here, and proposed to supply our society with preaching occasionally through the winter, and for us and others to pay you what we were able to do. We accepted your kind offer. You have been among us, and preached for us. We, and others who have heard you, have been pleased with and benefited by your discourses and those of Mr. Swan. A new interest seemed to be springing up here in Yarmouth, to know more of the true spirit of liberal Christianity. But all at once Mr. A. and Mr. B., with more zeal than knowledge,

are alarmed for the cause of Universalism in Yarmouth, though not a finger have they raised heretofore, when the church was closed, to help us. We feel that you must continue to come here, or send some one in your stead, as you have done, without regard to uncharitable charges that may be aimed at you or ourselves. . . . We care nothing about dogmas and creeds. It is a rational religion we need.

I regret the necessity which calls for this vindication; but as charges of unfairness, and improper interference with churches of another denomination, have been publicly and persistently made, I have deemed it my duty to state the simple facts in these cases, that all who feel any interest in the matter may be able to judge for themselves whether I have violated any of the principles which I avowed, or not. Now I pass to other topics.

It was not my purpose, when undertaking this mission, to direct my efforts exclusively to the forming of new societies, or to the reviving of old ones; but also to the object of diffusing our sentiments and making known our principles wherever I could have a hearing, and by the circulation of books and tracts and periodicals, as opportunity might offer, even should there be no prospect of immediate, visible results. The sower who goes forth to sow, must not be discouraged if some seeds fall by the wayside, and some on stony places, and some among thorns; for some also may fall upon good ground, and bring forth fruit,—thirty or sixty or an hundred fold.

Some of the places which I have visited for this purpose, and where I have preached occasionally, are Litchfield, Bowdoin, Windham, Gorham.

At Litchfield, I preached in the town-house, and had good congregations. One lady, seventy years old and upwards, walked the distance of several miles to attend the services; and told me that she should be willing to walk much farther, for the sake of hearing that kind of

preaching. The liberal element is here quite large, and, it is said, could support a minister if so disposed. But the population is widely scattered, composed chiefly of farmers, and unaccustomed to contribute much for religious purposes. Moreover, it is about equally divided between Unitarians and Universalists, who do not in all cases readily coalesce, and whose combined efforts would be necessary to permanent success. As the latter were holding occasional meetings in the town, I thought it better to yield the ground, and attempt no organization.

I was a good deal interested in my visit to Bowdoin. This, too, is an agricultural town. At Bowdoin Centre is a plain but comfortable meeting-house, owned and occupied for the most part, if I am rightly informed, by the Methodists and Free Baptists. None of them, as far as I could learn, had ever heard a Unitarian. By permission, I made an appointment to preach there on the 28th of June. The church was full. I told them that I came and should preach to them as a Unitarian, and that I should expect nothing for my services. They listened to me attentively through the day. At the close of the morning services, I offered them some tracts, which were eagerly taken. I observed that they were having a consultation among themselves, but did not know to what it related. At night they came to me, and said that they wished me to come again, and would take up a contribution ; for they were willing to pay for such preaching as that. I reminded them of what I had said, — that my services were already provided for, and that I could receive no compensation from them. I told them, that whatever they felt disposed to give would be thankfully received, but that it would go to increase the funds of the American Unitarian Association, and of the Maine Conference of Unitarian Churches. They replied that it

made no difference. They wished to contribute just the same; for they liked the doctrine. They did contribute; and, though the sum was not large, it was as much as they were accustomed to collect on such occasions; and it showed their good-will. I hope to visit them again.

At South Windham I preached but once, — on Sept. 1, at five, P.M., — going there from Saccarappa. The congregation numbered about one hundred and twenty-five. The Universalists have here a very comfortable church but it is rarely occupied. I was told that there are more than sixty liberal families in the town; but they are spread over the whole territory, so that it is quite difficult for them to come together, except in good travelling and pleasant weather. This is probably one cause why regular public services have so long been suspended. I met with a very kind reception; but, under the circumstances, I did not think it right for me at the time to inaugurate any movement which might tend to excite jealousies, or afford cause for complaint. Though there are no present indications of a change for the better, in the society as it now is, yet it is among the possibilities that such a change may hereafter occur; and I desire to put no obstacle in the way.

Gorham is a large and pleasant village, nine or ten miles from Portland, on the Portland and Rochester Railroad. There are, I believe, but two churches in it. The dominant influence has always been Orthodox Congregationalism. I supposed that it would prove a hard soil for us to work; and I was not mistaken. Some excellent Unitarian families are there, but they are very few. I thought it advisable to ascertain how many others there might be who would be inclined to co-operate in a liberal movement. I preached there three Sundays, and Rev. Mr. Everett one. The congregations varied from about

twenty-five to two hundred, according to circumstances. We occupied the town-hall, which, as the weather grew cold, became uncomfortable, and the meetings were necessarily suspended. Probably most who came did so from mere curiosity. I heard of some, however, who came out of sympathy with our views. If the movement here should be recommenced, a preacher should be sent who will be sure to draw an audience, and whose power will be felt.

I have preached several times at Freeport, eight miles from Brunswick. The work was commenced in this place, and has been carried forward till now, by the Rev. Mr. Copeland, of Brunswick; and to him belongs the credit of whatever degree of success has hitherto been attained. The people are intelligent, and have considerable pecuniary ability. They are respectable for numbers, for character, and influence. They are evidently in earnest. They labor under the disadvantage of having no good place for holding public religious services; but it is hoped that this inconvenience will soon be remedied. It has been proposed by them to build a comfortable but inexpensive house of worship during the summer; and I trust the plan will be carried out.

I have preached occasionally at Farmington. Our friends there do not seem to have made much progress during the last year; but the liberal element appears to have been growing stronger. On my last visit, Feb. 16, the congregation, in the afternoon, was the largest that I had seen. I was authorized to find them a minister suited to their wants. He must be a man of ability and discretion. Such a man would be welcomed, and sure to meet with success; while one without these qualifications would undoubtedly fail.

The most interesting work of the year, in view of

what has actually been accomplished, taken in connection with all the antecedents and with present circumstances, has been at Castine, a beautiful town, of historical note, of considerable wealth, and formerly of much commercial importance, situated on the east side of Penobscot Bay, and almost surrounded with its waters. The population, however, has never been large; and the business of the place has for many years remained nearly stationary, in consequence of its isolated position. The First Parish was organized about seventy years ago, near the close of the last century; and the Rev. Mr. Mason, a Unitarian, was settled over it. He retained his connection with it for about a third of a century. The pulpit was then temporarily supplied by different ministers for a number of years; after which the church was closed, and the congregation sought other places of worship. It is said that for twenty years the bell on this church had rung regularly to call other congregations together, while its own pulpit was vacant, and no congregations assembled there.

Within a few years, Castine had been brought into more regular communication with other portions of the State by a line of steamboats; and it had recently been selected as a suitable location for one of the two State normal schools. These, with other indications of renewed prosperity, led to the hope, that, if proper efforts were made, the interests of liberal Christianity in that community might also be revived. At the meeting of the Maine Conference during the last week in June, it was determined to make the trial. A correspondence was opened, and arrangements were made for supplying the pulpit until the matter could be fully tested, and the question decided. I went to Castine myself. I supplied the pulpits of brother ministers, that they also might go.

All were pleased with the place and the people, and encouraged by the prospect. Our friends there were satisfied that they had waited long enough, and that the time for action had come. Business meetings were called. A subscription paper was started, and generously signed to the amount of more than a thousand dollars. A new society was not formed, but the old parish was re-organized. In this way they were able to preserve all the old traditions and associations, besides being able to avail themselves of a parish fund paying annually somewhat less than two hundred dollars. This sum, added to the subscription, enabled them to start with the full sum of twelve hundred dollars, raised among themselves. The next difficulty was to find a minister adapted to the situation. Here, too, we were successful. The Rev. George F. Clark, who was the first minister sent there, proved highly acceptable, and has been retained. I hear that the society is still prospering, that the people are interested, and that the church is well filled, and the Sunday school large.

The results that have been attained in this State since the missionary movements began, so far as they have been determined, are briefly these: —

Waterville. — A new and beautiful church and a flourishing society, through the labors of Rev. Dr. Sheldon.

Ellsworth. — A beautiful church and prosperous society, through the efforts of Rev. Mr. Savary.

Saccarappa. — A church, in which there had been no liberal preaching for years, filled with attentive worshippers.

Houlton. — A church remodelled, a society revived, and permanent ministrations.

Farmington. — A new and promising society organized, and waiting for a minister.

Castine. — The First Parish re-organized under favorable omens, and provided with a pastor.

Freeport. — Interested audiences, hopeful of the future.

Of the seed that has been sown broadcast, nothing positive can be asserted now; but it is believed that all will not prove fruitless, and that "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Other work is before us. Other fields are to be visited. Some may require the plough and harrow; some may be ready for the planting; some may need watching and tending; and some may be ripening for the harvest. It matters but little who shall sow and who shall reap, provided the work is faithfully performed. For when the harvest is gathered; when he who may have gone forth even weeping, shall return at length, "bringing his sheaves with him," — then both sower and reaper shall rejoice together.

Very truly yours, A. D. WHEELER.

REPORT OF MIDDLE AND SOUTHERN STATES CONFERENCE.

WILMINGTON, DEL., May 1, 1868.

Rev. C. LOWE, Secretary.

DEAR SIR, — I herewith send you the report of the Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches of the Middle and Southern States.

I send, in this report, the *total* of the parishes reported to me; viz.: Northumberland; Church of the Saviour, Baltimore; Washington, D.C.; Germantown and Wilmington; and Vineland.

I have not received reports from First Independent Church, Baltimore, nor from Dr. Furness's Society, Philadelphia.

QUESTION.

1. *What has the American Unitarian Association done for you, or your society, or for the promotion of liberal views in your neighborhood, since Jan.* 1, 1867?

ANSWER.

1. Contributions in money, viz.: —

Loans for churches	$8,000.00
Support of ministers	2,924.42
	$10,924.42

2. Books: Supplied *two* parish libraries.
3. Tracts: 15,500 copies.
4. Periodicals: 117 "Journals."
5. Preaching: Supplied pulpit of Washington Parish.

QUESTION.

2. *What have you, or your society, or any individuals in your society, done for the American Unitarian Association, or for Conference, or for the Sunday-school Society, or other denominational objects?*

[State the missionary work done, tracts, &c., distributed, books sold, funds raised, correspondence, &c.]

ANSWER.

1. American Unitarian Association $752.00

2. Missionary work has been done in New Jersey, by Rev. Mr. Clute, in eight places in "Vineland Tract;" in Pennsylvania, by Mr. Porter, at Scranton, Wilkesbarre, and near Northumberland. At Atco, N.J., a society has been formed, and arrangements made for the employment of a missionary. In Maryland, Mr. Ware has preached at Mount Washington, near Baltimore; and will continue the service at the Park during the season.

3. Tracts distributed: 50,000 pages.
4. Books sold: No report.
5. Funds raised: Conference expenses $50.00
6. Correspondence: No report.
7. Books given away: 100 copies.

N.B. — No estimate of *individual* contributions, or of donations to Sunday-school Society, given in reports.

QUESTION.

3. *What amount of funds (not including your contributions for denominational purposes) has been raised among you for benevolent and charitable objects during the year?*

[State particularly the amounts raised for the education of the Freedmen.]

ANSWER.

1. Benevolent objects, including home charities, sewing-schools, &c. $689.00

N.B. — Very incomplete returns.

2. Freedmen $3,743.22

($2,000 from J. F. W. Ware included in this.)

(1.) Our parishes are all working with local societies, wherever they exist.

(2.) I think a safe estimate for *undenominational* purposes, given by our people, would be $5,000.00

QUESTION.

4. *What moneys have been raised or expended for church building, repairs, or improvements?*

[State what changes have been made.]

ANSWER.

1. Church-building: —

Germantown	$30,000.00
Vineland	7,000.00
Wilmington	15,000.00
Baltimore, Rev. J. F. W. W.	7,000.00
Total raised or expended	$59,000.00

This includes loans, subscriptions, home collections, and, in Mr. Ware's society, is but the commencement of an effort.

QUESTION.

5. *What religious periodicals, and how many of each, are taken in your society?*

ANSWER.

1. Periodicals, and numbers: —

(1.) Christian Examiner	No report: say	6
(2.) Register	„ „ „	50
(3.) Monthly Journal		200
(4.) Religious Magazine		6
(5.) Liberal Christian		40

(6.) Radical. Few taken.

The number in this report is mere guess-work, but I think it is not too large. "Monthly Journals" are *paid for*. Does not include donations from American Unitarian Association.

QUESTION.

6. *What proportion of the families in your society, do you think, own and read more or less Liberal-Christian books?*

ANSWER.

From all the estimates given, I suppose three-fourths of all our people have and read our Liberal-Christian books.

There is a wide-spread and continual demand for our literature, among our people and the community about us.

General Remarks. — The Sunday-school work of our Conference is not reported. I think there are schools in all the parishes.

Number of schools	9
„ „ scholars	400
„ „ teachers	65
„ „ volumes	1,000
„ „ papers taken	500
Expenses	$500.00

I give fair statement. Next report will be exact.

Conference meetings have been well attended, and they are now a success, and effect much good.

F. Israel, *Secretary.*

REPORT OF NORFOLK-COUNTY CONFERENCE.

Medfield, April 15, 1868.

My dear Sir, — I send you a record of such returns as have thus far been received from the Unitarian churches connected with the Norfolk Conference.* It may, I think, be inferred from this record, that, without those demon-

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* A carefully prepared table was submitted along with this report, of which we give the following condensation: —

Contributions.

To the Unitarian Association	$4,843.46
„ „ Sunday-school Society	564.45

strations which attract popular notice and applause, these churches have been in a sound and vigorous state through the past year. The amount of their contributions to the Unitarian Association, the Sunday-school Society, and other institutions, may not have been as large as that of some former years, while their interest in the objects of those institutions has remained undiminished. Local circumstances, peculiar to each church, may have prevented a continuance of their former liberality, or that liberality may have been of necessity turned into other channels.

Whether the spiritual prosperity of these churches may be, with confidence, inferred from the record, may indeed

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To the Children's Mission	145.50
„ „ Freedmen	3,864.00
„ „ Poor whites and Cretans	530.00
„ „ Meadville	225.00
„ „ Various purposes connected with the denomination, including money spent for church improvements	7,633.79

Donations Received.

From Unitarian Association	$350.00
„ „ „ Monthly Journals	275
„ „ „ Tracts	750

Periodicals and Papers taken.

Christian Examiner	5 copies.
Religious Magazine	11 „
Sunday-school Gazette	115 „
Christian Register	87 „
Liberal Christian	17 „
Monthly Journals	122 „
Radical	3 „
Universalist	11 „

This is a much smaller number than is taken, and only approximates the supposed number reported by the pastors.

be matter of doubt. Yet it would seem that the expenditures, of which it tells us, do imply a good measure of spiritual life and energy; and, apart from the record, there is good reason for believing that a high state of spiritual life and energy does exist in several of these churches.

In Dedham, the spirit awakened by the ministry of their late pastor continues to animate the whole parish, now that he is no longer with them to feed and foster it. Weekly conferences continue to be held, which are fully attended, and have been led by fourteen different members of the society.

In Dover, good evidence has been afforded of spiritual growth and prosperity by the large accessions to the church during the last year, and by the regular attendance of the major part of the congregation upon the Bible-class and Sunday-school. The ladies of the parish have deposited $330 in the savings bank, as a permanent charitable fund, in addition to what they have appropriated to meet immediate calls upon their benevolence.

In Medfield the society appears to be in a highly prosperous and promising condition. The regular attendance on Sunday has been increased, social meetings are held, large expenses are cheerfully met (though exceeding by one hundred per cent any ever met before); and a literary club has been formed, consisting of twenty-two families, for the purchase and use of the best periodicals and some valuable books.

In Sharon a new life has been created in the parish, which gives reasonable prospect of permanent and most desirable results. The congregation is enlarged, and social meetings in the vestry are described as "seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

In South Natick the society, limited in means as in

numbers, has kept alive a deep interest in the operations of the Association, and would have gladly contributed to aid them had it been possible. They have selected from their Sunday-school library about one hundred volumes of books, which were forwarded to a young man now resident in West Virginia, where he has gathered a Sunday school, which meets every Sunday. He reports that the books are eagerly welcomed, and all doing a good work. More might be said, I have no doubt, about the spiritual condition of the other churches; but the answers to the inquiries addressed to them have not afforded me any information beyond the statistics embraced in the record. More minute inquiries might have elicited information which would be most satisfactory and encouraging.

If I can render any further service in this matter, please command it, and believe me always, with kind regard, Yours truly,

CHARLES C. SEWALL.

REPORT OF SECRETARY OF ESSEX-COUNTY CONFERENCE.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE A.U.A.

DEAR SIR, — In accordance with your request, I present you some items in regard to the Essex-County Conference; less full and satisfactory, however, than they would be if answers had been returned to all the questions in your printed circular.

The Conference was organized at Salem, Dec. 11, 1866. Five meetings have been held, all at the larger places in the county. At first they were attended by few others than the appointed delegates, — three men and three

women from each of our fifteen societies. But gradually the interest has increased; and at the last meeting the church was filled morning, afternoon, and night.

It was designed, originally, that the Conference should be in a measure independent of the Association, raising money for missionary operations, and carrying them on within its limits by means of its own officers. Practically, however, this has been found inconvenient, involving all the expense and trouble of two organizations for doing the same work, without any corresponding advantages. So that now our funds are placed in the hands of the Association, with the understanding that appropriations to the extent of these funds shall be made for whatever objects within the Conference both Executive Boards shall approve.

The chief work of the Conference, thus far, has been the canvassing of the various towns in the county, and the supply of preaching in those where the liberal element would seem to warrant it. Movements have been made in Ipswich, Amesbury Mills, West Amesbury, Middleton, and Groveland; with the supply of preachers a part of the time at Lynnfield Centre, and services on two Sundays at Wenham. Services in Ipswich have been carried on regularly since June of 1867, the society there having raised $500 towards its expenses. Middleton, also, has had one service a week since Autumn. An unexpected degree of interest has been evinced wherever our word has been spoken. People have often come to hear it who had not been to a religious service before for years. It has revived and kindled the faith of those scattered in every community who have sympathized with us; errors and prejudices about us have been dispelled; and repeatedly it has met wants, moved and quickened souls, that no other sect has been able to reach.

In regard to your special questions, —

1st, Our relations with the Association have been throughout harmonious and pleasant. The "Monthly Journal" goes into all our societies, with occasionally a bundle of tracts. The tracts are taken with great avidity, and have proved exceedingly useful where we have started new societies. The Association, also, has been an indispensable agency in helping us occasionally to preachers for carrying on our work.

2d, Eleven societies in the Conference have contributed to the American Unitarian Association the sum of $2,833.49. A large part of the ministers, also, have given their services from one to twelve Sundays, in laboring for the new movements.

4th, North Andover has raised for church repairs, $900; Beverly, $18,000; Danvers, $325; Lawrence, $6,000; Lynn, $6,000.

5th, The Monthly Journal, Monthly Religious Magazine, Christian Examiner, Radical, Christian Register, Liberal Christian, Sunday-school Gazette, and Independent, are taken to some extent in all our societies.

6th, Not more than half of our families own and read to any extent liberal-Christian books. We hope the present year to put them in all town libraries throughout the county, and to make a decided effort for their circulation in families.

This is a sorry report in comparison with our real condition. We are full of plans and hopes for the future; and, encouraged by the success of what has been already undertaken, enter on our labors the present season with new zeal and activity.

JOHN C. KIMBALL, *Secretary.*

REPORT OF THE WORCESTER CONFERENCE.

GRAFTON, May 18th, 1868.

DEAR SIR, — I forward the report of the Worcester Conference of Congregational (Unitarian) and other Christian Societies to your keeping, for the use of the Council of the National Conference, as required by the ninth article of our constitution.

In order to make the report intelligible, I will state our plan of work, and the considerations out of which it grew.

The Conference was organized at Worcester, December 5th, 1866, by the adoption of the following constitution. [*This is similar to that of most of the Conferences.*]

At the first meeting of its Board of Officers, it was clearly shown, that our success depended upon the active personal interest of the members of our societies.

The National Conference revealed the need of local organizations for the deepening of Christian life and the strengthening of our religious fellowship. The thing needed to make these associations an effective power in our midst is the vitalizing of that *relation which we all hold to each.* If we can have living members in our societies, then these societies, uniting their strength, will give a living Conference, whose united purpose will burn deep into crime, error, and bigotry. To accomplish this, it was felt that there must be an organization of societies something more than the old custom, where three or four men were expected to do all the running of the parish machinery. In other words, that we needed system for the doing of much that had heretofore been left undone. After thorough discussion at the second meeting of the

Conference, the following plan was adopted and recommended to its members : —

Plan of Organization in Societies.

Christian Friends, — At the recent meeting of the Conference at Leominster, it was found, after thorough discussion, to be the general sentiment of the meeting, that our parishes are wanting in systematic methods for the accomplishment of that Christian work which should ever engage the sympathies and efforts of our churches and societies. This was embodied in the following resolutions, unanimously adopted by the Conference : —

Resolved, That this Conference deems it expedient that a more complete organization shall be adopted by all our societies, that the Christian work given us to do may be more efficiently done, first among ourselves, and then extended to others.

Resolved, That the Board of Officers of this Conference be, and they are hereby instructed, to prepare a form of organization in societies, embodying the spirit of the addresses at this meeting; and present the same to the several societies for their consideration, recommending its adoption after being modified by each as its peculiar tastes or circumstances may determine.

In the discharge of this duty, the Board of Officers offer the following suggestions : It is believed that measures may be adopted to promote more intimate personal acquaintance and mutual co-operation among the members of our societies. If there were a more prompt and cordial welcome to those who have not been accustomed to attend our places of worship, it would strengthen us. In all our towns there are many families without any positive Christian relations, who ought to be reached by our religious organizations. A more thorough and systematic training of the young in Christian faith and duties, and a more earnest and active interest among our people in advancing the cause of religion, whenever and wherever God gives them opportunity, are of vital importance to the life of each society and to the efficiency of the religious body to which we belong.

In the belief that a more complete and definite organization in our several societies would greatly aid in accomplishing the above purposes, we would present for their consideration the following plan : —

1. There should be, first, a Committee on the Sunday School,

of which the superintendent shall be chairman. Its duties shall embrace all pertaining to its organization, efficiency, and wants.

2. A Committee on Missionary Work. Its duties shall consist of the distribution of our religious literature, ascertaining the actual religious wants of the town, the attendance or non-attendance at church and Sunday school, reporting these facts to the Advisory Committee.

3. A Committee on Charity, whose duty it shall be to take measures to relieve the suffering and needy, and promote other objects of Christian benevolence.

4. A Committee on Christian Fellowship. This Committee shall extend the hospitality of the society to strangers, aiding any wishing to obtain pews, and promoting the mutual acquaintance of pastor and people. They shall take an interest in those leaving the society, seeing that they receive a letter of introduction to the society of our faith where they may be going, or the one nearest to that point. They shall devise means for the protection and improvement of young persons, and also for strengthening the society by the introduction of new members.

5. An Advisory Committee, composed of the chairmen of the other committees, over which the pastor shall preside. It shall be their duty to consult upon the general interests of the society, discussing means for its prosperity, marking out the stated times in the year for denominational and philanthropic contributions, and the objects for which appeals shall be made; and also to consider the best means of promoting a pure social life.

These committees shall hold stated meetings, and make an annual report to the congregation.

This plan is submitted as simply suggestive of one of the various methods which may be adopted for the accomplishment of the end designed.

Respectfully submitted in behalf of the Conference, by the Board of Officers.

W. G. Scandlin, *Secretary.*

Following this same thought, with the purpose of drawing our laity into co-operative Christian labor, we have concentrated effort upon missionary work; issuing a series of questions, the answers to which should form an annual report of the societies to the Conference, show-

ing their internal condition and the sphere for missionary work lying almost under the shadow of their steeples.

Worcester Conference of Congregational (Unitarian) and other Christian Societies.

Christian Friends, — This circular is issued in accordance with a vote of the Conference held at Uxbridge, Sept. 10th and 11th, 1867, "asking an annual report of the condition of each of our societies," and for the completion of its previous action, an organization whereby we hope to open the sphere of missionary work around us.

Questions on Annual Report of Society.

1. Legal name, and date of organization of society?
2. Number of families that are regular worshippers, with addition or loss during last year?
3. How many church-members or communicants?
4. How many and what services are held on Sunday, and what meetings during the week?
5. Known causes of prosperity or decline of the society. Any other particulars which will be of interest, and help show its condition. And any suggestions as to the way in which the Conference can be of service to the society?
6. How many teachers and how many pupils in the Sunday school, with addition or loss of last year?

Questions as Guide to Missionary Work.

1. Population of town?
2. Proportion of population outside of all religious societies?
3. What religious societies in town, and average attendance of each?
4. Number of villages (in town) of sufficient importance to have a store, post-office, or public hall; and how many of said villages are without any religious service?
5. Can you give the names of any families of liberal faith in neighboring towns where there are no liberal societies?

Have you organized your society on the plan recommended by the Conference?

As this report is to be made by the Secretary of the Conference at its annual gathering in January, to give time for its preparation, these statistics should be forwarded early in the month of

December, the answers following the order of the questions. In the interests of our common faith we ask this early response.

Per order of Board of Officers,

WILLIAM G. SCANDLIN, *Secretary, Grafton, Mass.*

The committees on missionary work were advised to obtain the statistics, through some member of their parish, in each school district of their town; the number in each family; where they attended church; and, where not attending church, any general remarks showing character and possibilities.

This was giving the work into hands who knew what was wanted, and asking that which required little for its accomplishment; familiar as all are in the old school districts of the towns. In this way the Conference starts the committees, and they set from nine to fifteen others in operation. Out of the twenty-nine societies in the Conference, fifteen replied to this circular; showing an increased degree of interest, and revealing local conditions for missionary work surpassing our deepest fears.

Having thus helped them toward a discovery of the facts, we are now setting them to work upon the material found; advising district meetings, where the liberal-Christian element of each district meets at the house of some one of its number, with any friends of the parish who are interested in the movement. After brief religious service the report of the district is read, and, where needed, amended. Then our duty to our neighbors is discussed, plans formed and strength concentrated. While starting this as our second year's work with the fifteen societies that are organized, we use all possible means to bring the others into line, so that we shall eventually have one system through which to concentrate our Christian purpose.

During the year 1867, twenty-two out of our twenty-

nine societies contributed, to the general missionary fund of the American Unitarian Association, $2,515.30; receiving therefrom for Conference purposes about $116. Reports show quite a large number to have drawn upon the American Unitarian Association for tracts, and Bolton acknowledges the receipt of a set of its publications for their town library; while the "Monthly Journal" is often spoken of as donated. Of the seven societies failing to contribute to this general fund, two — Milford and Lunenburg — are not existing; Ware has had its all swept away by fire; and the other four have been either building anew, or remodelling their old places of worship. Eleven societies report the following sums for educational and charitable purposes, $64,585. For the education of the freedmen (in many places there are union societies), $398.63; besides large donations of clothing. The Conference collected 665 volumes as a library for Charleston, S.C.; forwarding the same through Miss J. M. Patrick, of Hopedale, at whose solicitation the work was begun. For church repairs, eight churches report $7,670.12. Sunday-school Society, from seven societies, $202.18. Eleven societies take 289 copies of Christian Register, 66 copies of Liberal Christian, 15 copies of Examiner, 22 of Religious Monthly; seven societies 208 copies of Sunday-school Gazette. Two-thirds of our people own and read liberal-Christian books. Making a synopsis of the twenty-nine societies, — really twenty-seven, deducting two not now existing, — we find that twenty-one have been represented at the meetings of the Conference during the first year of its existence.

Twenty-two societies have contributed A. U. A. . .	$2,515.30
Eleven societies, charitable and educational	64,585.00
Amount carried forward	$67,100.30

Amount brought forward	$67,100.30
[Of this amount $62,000 was given by one individual connected with Dr. Hollis's society in Worcester, for educational purposes.]	
Eleven societies, freedmen; besides clothing and books .	398.63
Eight societies for church repairs	7,670.00
Seven societies for Sunday-school Society	202.18
In all	$75,371.11

Expending for Conference purposes, out of the amount passed to the American Unitarian Association, about $116.00.

Our Conference meetings have added greatly to the religious life of our parishes, and our report is nothing but religious harmony and strength from the union and fellowship.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM G. SCANDLIN, *Secretary W.C.*

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF SOUTH-MIDDLESEX CONFERENCE.

DEAR SIR, — The South-Middlesex Conference has attempted little of which the results can be embodied in a report. Its officers have sought to second and co-operate with the work of the Association within its limits. Four public meetings have been held, since January, 1867, which have been well attended; and at all of them there were interesting discussions concerning the practical needs and work of our churches. Some of the topics discussed were the organization of parishes; the true objects of a Christian society, and how they shall be accomplished; the religious education of the young; the state of religion in our churches, and in the community; the

work of the Conference in the promotion of Christianity; and the religious charities devolving upon our churches.

Some efforts have been made to ascertain what towns or districts within our limits are destitute of liberal-Christian preaching; and we trust that important work will be done in this direction during the coming year.

Only two societies within the limits of the Conference have received aid from the American Unitarian Association during the past year. One of these is a new society, in which preaching was sustained for the first three months by the Association; and the other, a feeble society, in aid of which the Association appropriated $100. Tracts have been supplied to several other societies; and nearly all have received the "Monthly Journal." Two town-libraries have been supplied with the publications of the Association. One society in the Conference has published and circulated denominational tracts at its own expense.

Twenty-four societies (out of twenty-seven in the Conference) report $93,104.76, raised for purposes apart from their current expenses. Sixteen societies raised $3,831.70 for the American Unitarian Association; twelve societies contributed $605.16 to the Sunday-school Society; seven societies (and individuals in them) report $4,373.36 raised for other denominational purposes: making a total of $8,810.22 contributed, within the limits of the Conference, to denominational charities.

$79,540.00 is reported, by seventeen societies, to have been raised for purposes of building and repairs. For the Freedmen, $3,088.10 was contributed by twelve societies, besides unknown amounts reported by seven others; and $1,666.44 is reported, by twelve societies, to have been spent in miscellaneous charities.

Many of the reports from the societies are incomplete

in several particulars; and some report additional sums raised for various purposes, but are unable to give the amounts. One society supports a student for the ministry at Antioch College.

The returns in relation to the periodicals of the Association are very meagre. Six societies report a total of 83 Registers, 26 Liberal Christians, 8 Monthly Religious Magazines, and one society takes 16 Examiners. Nearly all the societies report some of the periodicals taken; but, in the suburban towns, it is very difficult to ascertain the numbers. One fact is evident, from the answers to this inquiry, that a very great disposition exists among our churches as to the number of our periodicals taken, some of the smaller ones reporting as many as twenty "Registers," while other and larger ones report only four or five.

The inquiry as to religious books owned and read among our people has elicited little of value; nearly all returning an indefinite answer, if any. One has thought that one-fourth of the people own such books; another, that two-thirds do so; and perhaps the most suggestive reply is, that "not half as many are owned or read as there ought to be." Very truly yours,

HENRY H. BARBER, *Secretary.*

REPORT OF NORTH-MIDDLESEX CONGREGATIONAL CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

WESTFORD, MASS., April 25, 1868.

Rev. C. LOWE, Secretary, A. U. A.

I HEREWITH present the Annual Report of the North-Middlesex Congregational Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches. As some of the returns from

the societies are very meagre, and more or less indefinite, the statements made below must necessarily be short of the actual standing of the churches. The circulars sent me were issued to the several churches; and I have received returns from all but two, — those in Pepperell and in Wilton, N.H. The following are the answers to the inquiries in the circular: —

I. The American Unitarian Association have presented publications to one parish library and to one town library. Also distributed not less than 500 tracts: probably the number is very much larger.

II. The Conference has raised, for American Unitarian Association, $1,233.67; for incidental expenses, $52.17; for Meadville, $100.00; for Sunday-school Society, $69.00; for Children's Mission, $17.00; by books disposed of, $15.10. Total, $1,486.94.

There has been some work done in the way of preaching and of holding Sunday schools in out-districts.

III. Raised for charity (at least), $2,337.95. Probably the actual sum is very much larger than this.

IV. For repairs, such as remodelling pews, purchasing carpets, furnaces, organs, chandeliers, hymn-books, &c., $20,593.41.

V. Sunday-school Gazette, 202; Christian Register, 115; Liberal Christian, 77; Universalist, 4; Christian Examiner, 2; Radical, 2; Friend, 1.

I doubt whether these figures are more than sixty per cent of what the true statistics would show.

VI. Very indefinite answers have been given to this; yet I judge that a very fair proportion of the families in the societies read our literature. "*Our* literature" is a thing of so great range, that it is difficult to define its limits. In our own town, I find that the books presented by the Association are finding friends; and, what is very encouraging, the readers are, very many of them, by profession, entirely without the pale of our fellowship.

I have been interested in these reports. I find that North Middlesex is more alive than it has had credit for. We have a goodly fellowship in the ministry here, and a fine circle of churches.

You asked for suggestions regarding the work. For quite a while it has seemed to me, that one grand need is that of a *bishop*, whose duty it should be to visit as many churches as possible, present the claims of the cause, and in every way possible strengthen the bonds of our fellowship. Such an apostle would do more than we can estimate toward proving what now seems so difficult of proof, — that, as churches, we are *members* one of another. Especially would the country churches find it an inspiration to receive an official visit from an officer who should have the credentials of the American Unitarian Association, no less than those of the Spirit. The sum, whatever it might be, which the creation of such an office would require, would, in my opinion, be well expended.

Another suggestion is, that meetings be held, at stated times, of the *secretaries* and *treasurers* of all the Local Conferences.

Yours, &c., GEORGE H. YOUNG,
Acting Secretary, N. M. C. C. U. & C. C's.

REPORT OF THE CONNECTICUT-VALLEY CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN, CONGREGATIONAL, AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

OUR Conference was organized in Greenfield, Jan. 16, 1868, and held two meetings afterwards in the course of the year, — one at Northampton, in June; and one at Bernardston, in October.

The Conference embraces all the Unitarian societies in the Connecticut Valley, from Brattleboro', Vt., to Springfield, Mass., inclusive; and numbers thirteen societies. Of these, eight are sufficiently strong to be self-sustain-

ing; viz., Brattleboro', Bernardston, Northfield, Greenfield, Deerfield, Northampton, Chicopee, and Springfield. Five are small, and need more or less aid; viz., Warwick, New Salem, Rowe, Montague, and Whately.

Of the thirteen societies, *five* are without settled ministers; viz., Brattleboro', Deerfield, Warwick, New Salem, and Whately. All but two — viz., Warwick and New Salem — have regular preaching on Sunday.

We have contributed to the American Unitarian Association $1,955. We have received from the American Unitarian Association $475, to aid small societies. Several hundred tracts have been distributed; and every society, I believe, has received copies of the "Monthly Journal." I judge, from the returns made to me, that a majority of the families in our parishes read more or less of our books, "Journals," and tracts.

Our Conference is doing us a great deal of good in a variety of ways. 1. Our people are interested in the meetings. If they go once, they are eager to go again. It has come to be a thing looked forward to with pleasant anticipations. Where and when is the next Conference to be held? is the inquiry often made. It brings the people of our several parishes together, and makes them better acquainted with each other; and so establishes a new bond of interest among us. Pleasant acquaintances are then made, and lasting friendships established. 2. Then, again, the people are made acquainted with what is going on in the denomination. Its new enterprises and hopes and plans they hear discussed, and so catch something of the new spirit that is stirring among us. 3. Our work is far better organized than it ever was before. We know better where to work and whom to call upon. We have a survey of the whole field. We know better where it is worth while to attempt a new

organization. 4. Our weak societies feel the influence of the Conference. They feel that there is a power behind them to sustain them. They feel that they are not alone, struggling on without sympathy; but that there are those who feel an interest in them, and are ready to help them. If they are in want of pecuniary aid or of a pastor, they know to whom to apply for assistance. At our next meeting in May, we hope to add two societies to our list, — both of them new societies, built upon the scattered wrecks of old Universalist societies. In both of these there is now Unitarian preaching.

New openings for liberal societies are presenting themselves to our notice, which we mean to enter upon as soon as possible. But it is not our policy to scatter our efforts over too many places at once. As soon as the new society in Whately is put on a firm basis, — as it will be when the debt upon their church-building is paid off, which we hope will be accomplished this year, — we hope to concentrate our efforts upon another place, where there is no Unitarian society, and if possible plant one there. We do not mean to plant more than we can take care of. There is not a town in the valley where there are not more or less people who would gladly welcome Unitarian preaching. But it would be in vain to think of establishing societies in all of them: there are too many societies in many of them already. I should be glad to find some one earnest and wise man or woman, in every town, to take our tracts, and distribute them to those who would be profited by reading them. A great deal of good could be done by our tracts, if proper methods were used to bring them before the people. Our relations with the Universalist societies are pleasant and friendly; but, as they have their own denominational plans of action, it seems best for both parties to act independently, each

being careful not to interfere with the work of the other.

Our great want now is of a few *dull ministers*, — men who may not have the necessary qualifications for great parishes, with great salaries, in the cities, but would be content to be honest, faithful, devoted pastors of country parishes; men who would be content to live out of sight of the Boston State House, and fulfil in some humble way, as far as the times will allow, the old ideal of a country minister. We need four or five such ministers very much at once, — not men of showy parts, so much as men of an earnest and devoted spirit. There are abundant opportunities for work in this valley. They open upon us from unexpected quarters every year. We could have half-a-dozen new societies very soon, if we could find the right men to be the ministers. But it will hardly do to form new societies till our existing ones are provided with ministers.

I assure you, my dear sir, there is the best spirit prevailing among us, — a spirit of faith and hope. And if we cannot do as much for the American Unitarian Association this year as in previous years, it will be because we are just now doing more than ever in building and repairing churches.

Truly yours, J. F. Moors,

Secretary of Connecticut-Valley Conference.

REPORT OF THE PLYMOUTH AND BAY CONFERENCE.

Dear Sir, — In response to your request for a report of the churches of our Plymouth and Bay Conference, I regret that I can only give you a partial and very imperfect one, as I

have received answers to only a part of the circulars which I have sent to our various ministering brethren soliciting information of them.

These churches have been so long isolated in their relation, or non-relation, to each other, that some of them come very slowly into the co-operative fellowship to which they have been cordially and earnestly invited; and hence no greatly encouraging report can now be given of their combined work for the last year. Our Conference was organized at Hingham, on the 5th day of February, 1867, and holds quarterly meetings. These meetings have been well attended, excepting on very unpropitious days; and they have generally been considered so interesting and profitable by those present at them, that they will no doubt be permanent, and constantly increase in size and efficiency. Their future seems to be promising; and, by another anniversary week, the prospect is that the report can be made that nearly, if not quite, all of our churches have given their active sympathy and aid to the Conference, and through that to the American Unitarian Association. In some localities, various misapprehensions respecting our new organization, in its relation to the parent Association, have been entertained, and some prejudices, growing out of those misapprehensions; but these appear to be gradually passing away, and our hope is that some at least, if the last to come into the movement, will yet be among the first in earnestness and zeal for it.

But though the churches of the Old Colony are the oldest in the country, and most of them strong enough to stand alone, few of them think they are able to do much more than to sustain themselves, and the various local charities that have a special claim upon them. And, then, several of them have lately organized societies for effective "parish work," resembling that of the Suffolk Conference; and an influential minority, at least, of our brethren think that most of our expenditures of money should be among ourselves, rather than upon the American Unitarian Association for its missionary operations. But the majority have confidence in the Association, and will continue to sustain it according to their ability; but there will not be

likely to be any schism or any alienation of feeling in the Conference on account of different methods for appropriating funds; and if the Association goes on as wisely and effectively as it now seems to be doing, proving itself essential to the support and progress of our general cause, it will not be long before we shall all be a unit in its support. It will compel support by its good works and its success.

Our Conference consists of fifteen churches, extending from Quincy to Plymouth; three of them, however, — Plymouth, Bridgewater, and Scituate, — are at present without settled ministers, though they are all hearing candidates, and mean, of course, to sustain their churches.

This report is submitted with much regret that it could not be more complete and satisfactory, but with the hope, also, that by another year all of our churches will be in zealous co-operation with each other and with the American Unitarian Association.

William H. Fish, *Sec. P. and B. Association.*

LETTER FROM REV. DR. BELLOWS.

Rome, Italy, April 29, 1868.

My dear Mr. Lowe, — Your kind favor of Feb. 1 only reached me a few days since, on my return from my unexpectedly protracted tour in the East. Instead of two months, I was absent from Rome (where my wife remained) three months and a half! My children accompanied me. It was a most rich, as well as a most laborious, journey. Egypt is easily seen, and never to be forgotten; but Syria is the toughest country to travel over I have yet seen. We were twenty-seven days on horseback, travelling nearly six hundred miles, from Beyrout down the coast, by Tyre and Sidon, to Joppa; thence to Jerusalem and the Dead Sea; thence to Nablous, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Cesarea Philippi, Mount Tabor, and the sources of the Jordan; round the west flank of Hermon to Damascus; and then over Mount Lebanon back to Beyrout. In this route, we visited almost every spot of sacred interest in Palestine and

Samaria, Phœnicia and Syria generally, and derived an amount of instruction and quickening that I can hardly overstate. I really think this journey more important to young ministers than any other, and regret very much that I did not make it twenty years ago. It is almost like reading a fresh gospel! It was said of Kean's acting, that it was almost like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning. I felt that I was reading the New Testament in the steady sunlight of the Evangelists' own presence; and all the pages glowed with new meaning, and with an interpretation which is too atmospheric to be described. I would send *historical sceptics* to the Holy Land for their conversion, and have no sympathy with those who warn believers against visiting the Holy Places, if they wish to preserve their faith. Superstition, church rivalries, and the Moslem crescent have done their worst to vulgarize and desecrate the scenes of Jesus' ministry and the apostles' labors; but they have wholly failed to obliterate their footmarks, and the country remains one great altar, where, beneath heaps of ashes, the fires they kindled burn with inextinguishable heat and fragrance. Lies and credulous traditions spring there in tropical luxuriance; but the Holy Land is still full of witnessing truths and facts, as hard to choke as its stony mountains, its irresistible Jordan, its immortal cedars. The imagery of the Gospels corresponds so perfectly to the natural scenery, the topography, the flora, the climate, that a profound impression of the reality of the text deepens with every day's travel in Palestine. I found the most careless travellers reading their Bibles with all the eagerness of a new novel. The *Old* Testament ceases there to be an antiquated work. It becomes a guide-book, and a key to customs still in vogue; and is so inseparably connected with the New Testament, that one feels as if he never wanted to see them bound in separate volumes again. I have had pangs of deep regret that I had not drilled my own people in a more accurate familiarity with the Old as well as the New Testament, and that my own knowledge of the sacred writings was not tenfold greater. I have felt, at the same time, how deeply *human* these Scriptures were, and how little they owe their value and sacredness to the artificial authority so generally ascribed to them.

That they are artless, genuine, truthful records, I feel with entire conviction; and I am just as sure that they contain much, which, however thoroughly believed by their writers, was the heritage of a faith that came from unhistorical times, and is subject to the correction of scientific scepticism. But, with all this deduction, I feel a deeply increased reverence for the real, spiritual, and historical truth of both dispensations, as recorded in the Book of books; and Moses and Christ seem to me nearer to God, and more rightful masters of men, than ever before.

Whoever sees the *East* and the Christian religion there, will feel how much the gospel of Christ has owed to the free inquiry, the scientific analysis, the practical experience, of the *West*. I have utterly abandoned all fears for what honest doubt or rational criticism can do to the injury of true faith! Implicit faith, or unreasoning faith, or faith that honors blindness and ignorance, are here seen in all their degrading and hideous products, and make one fly from the bats and owls, — their true symbols, — to welcome the most lynx-eyed scepticism, the most ruthless rationalism, as infinitely safer and more wholesome than stagnant and poisonous credulity. Do not let us fear any more what free inquiry, what thoughtful doubt, what profound scholarship, what earnest philosophy, can do to unsettle Christian faith, or to endanger existing theologies. The East, and indeed Europe generally, are still doing what they have for ages been engaged in, — smothering thought on sacred and most vital questions. They have made the religion of Christ, at length, a political superstition, — a foe of popular liberty, a fortress of tyranny, a bit to break the will of the people, a blind for the schemes of selfish station and rotten ambition; until the gospel, as Christ taught it, is almost lost out of human knowledge. The errors these terrible old-world superstitions have petrified in their cathedrals, and wrought into the most fascinating works of sculptural and pictorial art, are reflected in the dogmatic faith of the Protestant world in America, and require to be exorcised by the most stern and courageous questionings of reason and conscience, of science and experience. I believe that the cause of rational Christianity is the most divine and sacred cause in the world, and that we shall

lose our mission if we are false or wavering to the principles of the freest and most faithful research, and the most absolute respect for honest and fearless investigation. I have sometimes shared the anxiety of other men, no longer young, touching the tendencies of free inquiry; but I must henceforth discard such weaknesses. I find the work of caution and conservation of opinions, simply because of age and associations, too much overdone, all over Europe, to make it worth my while to join in it. Nay more, I find all wrongs and injustices in the shelter of this apprehension about theological progress, and this fear of free inquiry; and I am confident, that, if Christ's own faith lives anywhere, it is where thought is most free and the human soul most unbound, — most inquisitive and most liberal in its sympathies and opinions.

Another thing has impressed me deeply in coming into closer contact with Judaism and Mahometanism, both profoundly theistic faiths, — the absence of a *Mediator* has not added to their spirituality or their purity. Without dogma and without ritual (in our day), they are both intensely formal and superstitious beyond belief. God is so far off, that their disciples cannot correct the false impressions given of him, in one age, by fresh consultation with the Image or Representative of his character. He is too high and holy to be investigated; he paralyzes thought, and refuses sympathy. He remains an unknown God. There is no progress in such religions, but only retrograde movement and deterioration. Judaism and Moslemism saw their best days in their earliest years. Christianity alone has the elements of progress in it. Its human character, which it owes to Christ's position in it, keeps it in sympathy with current life; and it derives strength, freshness, and perpetual re-birth from the fact that the Christ is re-born in the heart of every new generation, the same, yet ever more and better, because more deeply understood. Institutions, especially of a religious kind, must have some *flux* in them, or they harden into alien forms, and finally become crusts and prisons for the soul. The Mediator is really the perpetual renewer of Theism. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father *through the Son;* and the Greek Church owes no small part of its deadness, and want of relation to the

age, from its denial of this essential and catholic truth. I wish those who think the Christ a *transient* element in the monotheistic faith, would study Judaism (which is still a great fact) and Moslemism (which is a still mightier) with reference to the unmoral and unspiritual influence proceeding from their purely theistic theology. I think it would throw great light upon the question of questions now agitating the liberal Church, — how far we can have and maintain all that is best and most vital in Christianity, and leave Christ out of the account. I am fully persuaded, that the working principle of the gospel is the *person* of Christ; and that a public religion would cease to exist, were he exorcised from the faith and his mediatorial office, — first slighted, and then denied. He is, I doubt not, the perpetual Mediator, and vehicle of religious truth; the High Priest, who is never to give up his office while human history endures; and I am confirmed in my confidence, that real progress and true spiritual life and growth will come just in proportion to the union of free thought and large liberty with tender devotion to his guiding life and holy leadership. God, in purely theistic systems, is either *un*human, — that is, unintelligible; or else *too* human, — that is, such another as ourselves, and without life to give. The mediatorial character of Christ and his religion supplies the *true super*-human, — God brought close to human sympathies, but always above them. Christ alone keeps the soul from worshipping its own image, under the name of God. God made man in *his* image, but it is fatal to reverse the process. Christ prevents it.

Another point has been this. In the *East*, the whole basis of life is religion. The Sultan is the head of the Moslem faith and worship; the Emperor of Russia, the head of the Greek Church; the Pope, still a temporal sovereign. Religion, up to this time, has been the first interest of states, and inseparably connected with the state. It is now the greatest instrument of policy in Turkey, Russia, Italy. Why? Because the instincts of the masses are religious, and there is no sentiment so truly common to them, — no one whose importance all recognize, or through which they can so readily be moved or satisfied. The amount of the sacrifices made to religion in the Moslem, Greek,

Roman faiths, is prodigious. Relative to our wealth, *we* do nothing for religion compared with the common people of the Old World. Now the connection between church and state is doomed, and happily so. But what has been, and is going to be, the first effect of dissociating religion from the state? Of course, immediate divisions and disintegrations, tending all the while to individualism, and the disparagement of religious communion and fellowship and public worship. The best heads, and many of the best hearts, have already got to the full logical length of the premises, and have become kings and priests to themselves; and have no need of priest, ritual, or church, as they think. What would be the consequences if religion were made *wholly* a matter between man and his God, and were universally treated in that way, — as a thing in which sympathy and fellowship were not required or desired? Would human brotherhood — which must then mainly display itself in other forms of association — continue to have the sacred value which the Christian faith gives to it? *Is* humanity, in its individual specimens, the same *thing* as the humanity of the race? Are there not senses that belong to our associated life, which are the deepest and divinest we have? In short, are the majority of human beings capable of the higher sentiments, except in association and under the quickening of contagious sympathies, kept alive by common symbols, by sacred places, and by a ministry set apart for their encouragement and instruction? I am afraid we are straining the cord of conscience when we throw men wholly on their private sense of duty; and giving *reason* too much to do when we trust religion wholly to its suggestions. The *Church* has a place which cannot safely be filled by any thing else, and which cannot be left empty long without peril to the race. I feel that even the superstitious and ignorant, who have a common faith, and look together up to God, possess some qualities which no intellectual dignity or moral purity can of themselves alone furnish equivalents for. When society loses its consolidated life, its community of sentiment, its common faith and worship, it is rapidly disintegrating, and becoming incapable of great affections or of great beliefs. No man is as wise as the community; no private passions as mighty, no private

intelligence as large, as the common soul. I believe that we are treating the intellect very much as they treat the livers of the geese in Strasburg, — giving it an unnatural development, — on the supposition that men's intelligence is more *knowing* than their affections and their aspirations and their sympathies. The Church represents, and is the medium, perhaps the *condition*, of our Christian faith, as the home is of our family affections. I feel how perilous, for any man, contempt for religious association is, and know how largely my own faith depends on human fellowship for its strength and happiness. I think a better and stronger sense of this would bring back the wandering intellect that has left the Church, and would also restore much of the beauty and variety now lost to public worship by the neglect of a proper symbolism, and the decay or disparagement of the imagination. *Institutions* are not mere matters of prosaic reason or arithmetical utility. The subtlety of human wants, and the intricacy of the threads that hold us safely and happily together and to God, can hardly be exaggerated. Woe to those who cut away every thing they cannot see the use of!

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I am really very anxious to be at home again and at work, however my delay may strike my friends. But I have not felt out of the field of denominational labor here in Europe, and hope to contribute something useful to our cause by the review under which I have been passing the religious life of men in so many countries. Do commend me affectionately to all our brethren.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

Egypt's Place in History. A Presentation. By Mrs. DALL. Boston: Lee & Shepard.

This is a *résumé* of the great work of Bunsen in five volumes upon this subject. The history of Egypt, and the yet older history with which it connects itself, is a most fascinating study; involving the account of things that were already ancient when the Pyramids were reared. Sometimes the conclusions urged upon us by the investigators seem pure conjecture; but then, again, when we examine their reasons, these remote events and dates seem more real and certain than those recorded yesterday.

It was a difficult attempt to reproduce on such a subject, in the small compass of this pamphlet, the bulky volumes of Bunsen, and it can hardly be expected altogether to satisfy. Yet many will gain enlarged ideas from this industriously prepared compendium who cannot have access to the larger work, and others will be stimulated by it to further investigation. — (ED.)

Ten Years on the Euphrates. By Rev. C. H. WHEELER. Boston: American Tract Society.

Some years ago, at Constantinople, we had an opportunity to see something of the missionaries of the American Board, and among them we met two who had come on a visit from Eastern Turkey, from the supposed locality of the Garden of Eden; and we remember well the impression we received of their self-sacrificing earnestness and zeal in the cause, which gave the effect of romance (only it needed a higher word to express the kind of interest) to the story of their life.

In this book we have a record of ten years of missionary experience in that same region, and a similar impression is given still. Some of the theories of missionary effort we do not accept, and in a careful review of the book should wish to discuss; but in the main we are interested by the exposition.

The practical character of all the operations, and the energetic methods employed, are especially noticeable and instructive. One principle adopted was, that the natives should be taught to pay for all they received. The missionaries never gave books and tracts: people must buy them. As an illustration of their manner of dealing, it is told that to a certain place where preaching was needed they sent a student

from their seminary for several successive weeks. "But, as they left him to pay ten cents each time for his donkey's barley, we stopped his going. When, again, some of the people came to inquire why their preacher didn't come, 'You wish him to come,' said we, 'and compel him to pay for his donkey's food!' 'If that is all, we will give it,' they replied; and the preacher resumed his visits."

Studies in the Life and Writings of Ernest Renan. To be issued and completed in 14 monthly parts. By JOHN R. BEARD, D.D. London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co.

We have received three parts of this work, to which the interest awakened by Renan's "Life of Jesus" and the reputation of Dr. Beard will insure attention. The design seems to be, along with a refutation of the doctrines advanced by Renan, to present leading points of Christian evidence. — (ED.)

Christianity: its Perfect Adaptation to the Mental, Moral, and Spiritual Nature of Man. By ATHANASE COQUEREL. London: Longman & Co. For sale in Boston by the American Unitarian Association.

This volume was published twenty years ago. But, besides that the recent death of its distinguished author gives now an especial interest to what he wrote, the topics treated of are of such abiding importance, that the length of time which has elapsed since its preparation takes comparatively little from the value of the book. It was composed in the prime of the author's life, and was, as he says, "the summary of the long studies of thirty years."

The style combines, in a wonderful degree, the qualities of vigor and precision and clearness and warmth. No one who reads this volume can fail to understand the attractiveness of the man who, for more than thirty years, ranked among the greatest pulpit orators in France. — (ED.)

Christianity from God. By ALVAN TOBEY. Boston: American Tract Society.

This treatise reviews, in a very clear and satisfactory and interesting way, the prominent evidences of Christianity. It is independent and candid, while deeply religious in tone; and while in theory Orthodox enough to be issued by the Tract Society, we were gratified in reading it to find how large a portion of it commands our own hearty assent. — (ED.)

Lessons on the Christian Life (*for older classes*). By CAROLINE S. WHITMARSH. Boston: William V. Spencer.

This is a Question Book for Sunday Schools, prepared on an unusual plan, but one which must commend itself; and it is so admirably carried out, that we have no hesitation in pronouncing it a most valuable contribution to our Sunday-school literature, and in predicting for it an extensive acceptance. — (ED.)

Jesus and his Questioners. By C. S. CARTER, M.D. Boston: H. B. Fuller.

The idea of this book is excellent, viz., to associate topics of religious instruction with the incidents in our Saviour's life, and to draw the lessons upon them from his actual intercourse with inquiring minds. Whether, as the plan is carried out, the book will be successful, we should hardly dare to predict without actual trial of it with classes. — (ED.)

MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

May 22, 1868. — Present: Messrs. Kidder, Smith, Cudworth, Livermore, Reynolds, Willson, Crosby, Fox, and Lowe.

The Committee on Publications reported, that books had been granted, in response to applications received, as follows: To town libraries in Castine, Me., and Winchester, Mass.; Genesee College, Genesee, N.Y.; Methodist Agricultural College, West Virginia; Union for Christian Work, Providence, R.I.; Parish Library, Melrose, Mass. Also copies of the new Hymn and Tune Book to the Cambridge Divinity School, Meadville Theological School, and Boston School for the Ministry.

In accordance with the recommendation of this Committee, appropriations were voted for the following purposes: To purchase of Rev. G. R. Noyes, D.D., the copyright of his New Translation of the New Testament; to issue new editions of the Hymn and Tune Book, Eliot's Doctrines of Christianity, and Altar at Home; also new editions of ten tracts of the First Series.

The Committee on the New-England States presented a report,

in which the following appropriations were recommended, all of which were voted: $600 to the society in Whately, Mass., on condition that, with this aid, the debt of the society should be entirely liquidated, and that this amount should be secured so as to revert to the Association, in case the church should cease to be used for a Unitarian society; $100 to the society in Brooklyn, Conn., for the ensuing year; $75, in accordance with the request of the Worcester-County Conference, to Rev. W. G. Scandlin, Secretary of that Conference, for services the past year; $100 to the society in Mendon, Mass., for the year beginning whenever they shall have settled a permanent pastor; and $200 to the society in Exeter, N.H., for the year beginning June 1, 1868.

The Committee on the Middle and Southern States submitted reports from Rev. R. P. Stebbins, D.D., of Washington; Rev. Oscar Clute, of Vineland, N.J.; and Rev. Fielder Israel, of Wilmington, Del.

They made the following recommendation, which was adopted: That Rev. Samuel J. May be appointed an agent and missionary of this Association, especially for service in the region of Central New York; the details of this service to be arranged between Mr. May and the Middle and Southern States Committee of this Board.

The Special Committee, chosen at the March meeting, to confer with the Conference of the African Methodist-Episcopal Church, reported that they had attended the Convention of that Church in Washington; and, after a full explanation of the proposition of this Board, and a deliberate discussion of it in the Convention, a Committee of that body was chosen, to prepare, in conjunction with the Committee of this Board, a definite plan, to be submitted to the Convention.

The two Committees, in consultation, decided to propose, that the money offered by this Association be expended by a joint Committee (an equal number to be chosen by each of the two bodies from their own number), and that the whole be expended in two definite ways, — first, by the circulation of such reading matter as should be approved by the joint Committee; and, second, by such aid in educating young men for teachers and

preachers, in the educational and theological institutions of the African Methodist-Episcopal Church, as should be agreed upon by the joint Committee.

These propositions were to be presented to the Convention for their action, and no report had yet been received by the Committee.*

The special Committee appointed at the last meeting to consider and report as to the expediency and practicability of a union of this Association and the Sunday-school Society, reported that they had held two meetings for the consideration of the questions submitted to them. At the second of these meetings the Government of the Sunday-school Society appeared, at the request of this Committee; and, after a full and free expression of opinions, a sub-committee of that body was appointed for further conference with the representatives of this Association. It was understood that it would not be practicable to take any further action until after the Annual Meeting of the Association; and the Committee therefore asked to be discharged from the further consideration of the subject, and that it be referred to the next Board, with a recommendation for the early appointment of a Special Committee to confer with the Committee already appointed by the Sunday-school Society.

This report, having been read, was accepted, and the recommendation contained therein adopted.

The Secretary read the report which he had prepared, which it was then voted unanimously to adopt as the Annual Report of the Executive Committee, to be printed, and distributed at the Annual Meeting on the following Tuesday.

After the transaction of other business, it was voted to adjourn *sine die*.

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* A communication has since been received, saying that the proposition was unanimously accepted by the Convention.

INTELLIGENCE.

The Annual Meeting of the Warren-Street Chapel Corporation, Boston, was held at the Chapel on Sunday evening, April 19. The report of the Superintendent, Rev. William G. Babcock, was read, and the report of the Treasurer; and officers were chosen for the coming year, — the old Board being re-elected.

The Worcester-County Conference met at Fitchburg, Mass., on Tuesday evening, April 21, and continued in session through the following day.

A sermon was preached, on Tuesday evening, by Rev. Edwin G. Adams, of Templeton; which was followed by addresses from Hon. Phineas Ball, of Worcester, the President, and others.

Wednesday morning, the exercises commenced with a meeting for conference and prayer, conducted by Rev. George N. Richardson, of Westborough; after which the Convention was called to order by Rev. Alonzo Hill, D.D., of Worcester, one of the vice-presidents. After remarks by the Chairman, prayer offered by Rev. Joseph Allen, D.D., of Northborough, and the reading of the records of the last meeting, the following resolution was offered, and unanimously adopted: —

Resolved, That the First Universalist Society in Gardner, Rev. Mr. Clossen, pastor, having expressed a desire to unite with this Conference, and having been recommended for membership by vote of the board of officers of this Conference, be received accordingly.

The following resolution furnished the subject for discussion: —

Resolved, That we especially devote our strength, at the present time, to awaken the dormant spiritual and social life of our people.

The discussion was introduced by an address from Rev. Rushton D. Burr, of Uxbridge, and was continued through the morning session; various gentlemen, clergymen and laymen, taking part.

At the opening of the afternoon session, Professor Tacchella, of Milan, Italy, was introduced, and explained his plans for pro-

curing funds to purchase a press and type to establish a Protestant newspaper in Italy. The discussion of the morning was then resumed, and continued till the time for adjournment.

The next meeting of the Conference will be held at Templeton, Sept. 1 and 2.

The Channing Conference held a meeting at Fairhaven, Mass., on Thursday, April 23; Captain Timothy Gordon, of Taunton, Vice-President, occupying the chair.

Reports from the various Standing Committees were read and accepted, one of which announced the organization of a Unitarian society at Holmes Hole, Martha's Vineyard; and the society was admitted into the Conference.

William B. Weeden, Esq., of Providence, president of the newly formed union for Christian work in that city, gave, by request, an account of its operations and its plans.

Addresses were made by Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston; Rev. Charles Lowe, Secretary of American Unitarian Association; and others.

The officers of last year were re-elected.

The Boston-Theatre Meetings for the present season were closed on Sunday evening, April 26, with a sermon by Rev. George H. Hepworth, on "Head-winds in the Voyage of Life."

The New South Free Church, erected on the corner of Tremont and Camden Streets, Boston, by the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches of that city, was dedicated on Tuesday evening, April 28. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer, and reading from the Scriptures, by Rev. William P. Tilden, the pastor; act of dedication, by Rev. Chandler Robbins, D.D., President of the Benevolent Fraternity of Churches; dedicatory prayer, by Rev. Rufus Ellis, of the First Church; salutation of the churches, by Rev. Samuel K. Lothrop, D.D., of the Brattle-street Church: addresses, by Rev. Edward E. Hale, of the South Congregational Church; Rev. Samuel H. Winkley, of Pitts-street Chapel; Rev. George H. Hepworth, of the Church of the Unity; and Rev. Charles J. Bowen, of Roxbury: concluding prayer, by Rev. Henry W. Foote, of King's Chapel: benediction, by the pastor.

Rev. Samuel R. Calthrop was installed as pastor of the society in Syracuse, N.Y., on Wednesday, April 29. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer, and reading from the Scriptures, by Rev. T. D. Cook (Universalist), of Trenton Falls, N.Y.; sermon, by Mr. Calthrop; prayer of installation, by Rev. Frederic Frothingham, of Buffalo, N.Y.; charge, by Rev. Samuel J. May, former pastor of the society; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. Richmond Fiske (Universalist), of Auburn, N.Y.; concluding prayer, by Rev. W. Ellery Copeland, of Brunswick, Me.; benediction, by the pastor.

The New-York and Hudson-River Conference held a meeting in New York, in the Church of the Messiah, commencing on Tuesday evening, May 5, and continuing through the following day.

Tuesday evening, a sermon was preached, by Rev. William R. Alger, of Boston, on "The True Method of Salvation."

On Wednesday, after a devotional meeting of about an hour, the regular session of the Conference began; Rev. Alfred P. Putnam, of Brooklyn, Vice-President, in the chair. Rev. W. R. G. Mellen, the Secretary of the Conference, read a report; after which, reports were presented from the various societies connected with the Conference. At the afternoon and evening sessions, remarks were made by the following gentlemen, among others: Rev. William Sharman, a Unitarian clergyman recently arrived from England; Rev. J. L. Corning, pastor of an Orthodox society at Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Rev. James W. Thompson, D.D., of Jamaica Plain, Mass.; and Rev. William R. Alger, of Boston.

The Annual Meeting of the Children's Mission to the Children of the Destitute, Boston, was held on Wednesday, May 6; and the following gentlemen were elected as the Executive Committee for the coming year: Hon. Albert Fearing, President; George Merrill, Secretary; William Crosby, Treasurer; Henry P. Kidder, Charles Faulkner.

The Suffolk Union for Christian Work, after several preliminary meetings, met, at the vestry of the Hollis-street Church, Boston, on Wednesday evening, May 6, for organiza-

tion; and the following officers were chosen: President, James L. Little; Vice-Presidents, Thomas Gaffield, Abram Firth, George B. Emerson; Secretary, George P. Hayward; Assistant Secretary, Miss Caroline S. Whitmarsh; Treasurer, Francis V. Balch.

The Last Services in the First Church, Chauncy Street, Boston, were held on Sunday, May 10; and the society worshipped the following Sunday in the vestry of their new church. The old church will be at once demolished, and stores erected in its place.

The Connecticut-Valley Conference held a meeting at Brattleboro', Vt., on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 12 and 13.

Tuesday afternoon, there was a business meeting, at which reports were presented, and officers chosen for the coming year.

In the evening, Mr. David Cronyn, a graduate of the last class at Meadville, was ordained to the work of the ministry; having accepted an invitation to take charge of the society in Montague, Mass. The sermon was preached by Rev. Calvin Stebbins, of Chicopee; Rev. Edgar Buckingham — present as a representative of the society in Deerfield, of which he has temporary charge — offered the ordaining prayer; Rev. John F. Moors, of Greenfield, gave the charge; and Rev. Charles Noyes, of Northfield, the right hand of fellowship.

Wednesday morning, there was a prayer-meeting, conducted by Rev. Frederic W. Holland, of Rutland, Vt.; after which the regular sessions of the Conference were continued. The report of the Secretary, Rev. John F. Moors, was read; after which, Rev. Edgar Buckingham read an essay on "The Present Condition of Religion in the Community, and the Means of Awakening an Increased Interest;" which was followed by a discussion, continuing till the adjournment of the Conference.

Rev. Edward I. Galvin was installed as pastor of the society in Peabody (South Danvers), Mass., on Wednesday, May 13. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer, by Rev. Charles C. Sewall, of Medfield; reading from the Scriptures, by Rev. John B. Green, of Chelsea; sermon, by Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D., of Boston; prayer of in-

stallation, by Rev. Leonard J. Livermore, of Danvers; charge, by Rev. Edward E. Hale, of Boston; right hand of fellowship, by Rev. George Batchelor, of Salem; address to the people, by Rev. Warren H. Cudworth, of East Boston; concluding prayer, by Rev. James Sallaway, of Clinton; benediction, by the pastor.

Rev. Jason F. Walker, formerly of Detroit, Mich., has charge, for the present, of the society recently organized in St. Joseph, Mo.

Rev. George W. Stacy has accepted an invitation to supply for a year the pulpit of the First Congregational Society in Sharon, Mass.

Rev. Rushton D. Burr has resigned the charge of the society in Uxbridge, Mass.

Rev. George Proctor, formerly pastor of the First Parish, Dover, Mass., has accepted a call from the Universalist society in Westminster.

Rev. Daniel W. Stevens has accepted the call of the newly organized society at Holmes Hole (Tisbury), Mass.; and will also act as the missionary of the American Unitarian Association on Martha's Vineyard, and among the shipping in the harbor of Holmes Hole.

Rev. Edward C. Guild has resigned the charge of the society in Ithaca, N.Y.

Rev. Richard Coleman, formerly of Mendon, Mass., has accepted an invitation to take charge of the society in Wilton, N.H.

Rev. George N. Richardson has resigned the charge of the society in Westborough, Mass.

Rev. Carlton A. Staples, Western Agent of the American Unitarian Association, will hereafter have his headquarters in Chicago, Ill., at the Rooms of the Christian Union, No. 2, Washington Street, to which place all letters for him should be addressed, and where, also, a full assortment of Unitarian and liberal-Christian literature may always be found. Mr. Staples holds himself in readiness to preach and lecture wherever his services may be needed, and to render such help as he is able in the organization of new societies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

1868.			
April	20.	From Society in Winchester	$75.00
	21.	„ Chestnut-Hill Society, Brookline	30.00
	23.	„ E. G. French, Epworth, Iowa	10.00
	24.	„ Mrs. M. B. Blanchard, of Harvard, to make Rev. E. C. L. Browne, of Bolton, a life-member	30.00
	24.	„ Society in Nantucket	63.00
	25.	„ Society in Keene, N.H., for Monthly Journal	35.00
	27.	„ Society in Fitchburg, for Wilmington Church	46.64
	27.	„ Third Religious Society, Dorchester	107.10
	27.	„ Society in Weston, for work among Freedmen, under direction of Rev. J. F. W. Ware	30.00
	28.	„ Society in Saco, Me.	52.50
	28.	„ J. T. Cotton, Southboro'	10.00
	29.	„ Rev. Stilman Barber, as annual membership	1.00
	30.	„ Rev. R. R. Shippen's Society, Worcester	715.00
	30.	„ Hollis-street Society, Boston	1,103.56
	30.	„ Society in Sturbridge	35.75
May	4.	„ Miss L. E. McClellan, East Greenwich, R.I.	50.00
	4.	„ Mrs. C. H. Dall, as annual membership	1.00
	7.	„ Society in Washington, D.C.	100.00
	7.	„ King's Chapel Society, Boston, additional	13.00
	7.	„ Rev. B. F. Summerbell, as annual membership	1.00
	11.	„ Hollis-street Society, Boston, additional	50.00
	11.	„ Lee-street Society, Cambridgeport, for Freedmen, as above	25.00
	11.	„ J. F. Conrey, as annual membership	1.00
	13.	„ South Congregational Society, Boston, including $30 from William Brigham, to make his wife a life-member	1,900.00
	14.	„ Society in Peterboro', N.H.	60.00
	16.	„ Ladies' Association, connected with Society in Peabody	20.00
	18.	„ Rev. H. L. Myrick, as annual membership	1.00
	19.	„ Arlington-street Society, Boston	3,330.27
	19.	„ Hawes-place Society, South Boston	115.00
	19.	„ Rev. Dr. Furness's Society, Philadelphia	520.00
	19.	„ Rev. J. B. Green and Rev. J. Fisher, as annual memberships	2.00
	20.	„ Society in Montreal, Canada	200.00
	21.	„ Rev. Dr. Briggs's Society, Cambridgeport	400.00
	21.	„ Society in Arlington, for Freedmen, as above	30.00
	23.	„ M. W., to make Henry D. Wilmarth a life-member	30.00
	23.	„ Arlington-street Society, Boston, additional	25.00
	23.	„ Friends in New Brunswick, N.J.	35.00